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"In passion and in hope:" The pilgrimage of an American radical, Martha Dodd Stern and family, 1933--1990

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**"IN PASSION AND IN HOPE:"
THE PILGRIMAGE OF AN AMERICAN
RADICAL,
MARTHA DODD STERN AND FAMILY,
1933 - 1990**

by

JOHN F. FOX, JR.

BA, University of Notre Dame, 1988
MA, Boston College, 1993

Dissertation

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
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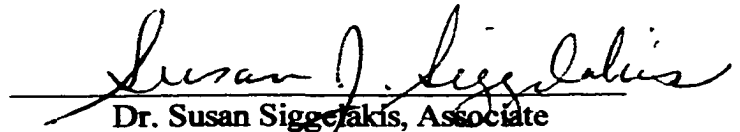
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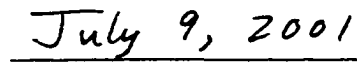

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Dedication

To Dorothy, without whose support this dissertation could not have been completed.

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generously shared his time and writings with me and provided me with firm evidence of the commitment and honor that FBI Agents bring to their work.

I would also like to thank the Prepublication Review staff at the FBI. It must be noted that in the process of researching this dissertation I became quite fascinated by the FBI. In need of full time employment, I applied to, was accepted at, and began working for the FBI. As a condition of my employment, I agreed to allow the FBI to review any writing that I was to publish outside of the Bureau when it dealt with the Bureau or matters it handled. The review ensures that I do not improperly release information to which I am privy by the nature of the work I do in the government. Since this work is based solely on open sources, the FBI required no changes to my manuscript. The conclusions and analyses are solely mine and the evidence they are derived from is available to all.

The Graduate School of the University of New Hampshire awarded me a small Research Enhancement Grant and the History Department also provided support during my research.

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spent so much time on the computer). May God bless all those who have contributed to this project.

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List of Abbreviations Used

ADA	Americans for Democratic Action
ALP	American Labor Party
AMTORG	American Trading Organization
ASP	Arts, Sciences and the Professions
BEW	Board of Economic Intelligence
BMMC	Boris Morros Music Company
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COMINT	Communications Intelligence
CPUSA	Communist Party of the United States
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
Gestapo	Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police)
IACP	Inter-American Pharmaceutical Company.
KPD	Kommuniste Partie Deutschland (Communist Party of Germany)
MID	Military Intelligence Division
MISUR	Microphone Surveillance
NKVD	Narodnyy Komisariat Vnutrennikh Del (People's Commisariat for Internal Affairs)
NSA	National Security Agency
ONI	Office of Naval Intelligence
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PCA	Progressive Citizens of America
RUP	Rassemblement Universale pour la Paix (International Peace Campaign)
SAC	Special Agent in Charge
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
SS	Schutzstaffel (Protection Detachment)
TESUR	Technical Surveillance
WFO	Washington Field Office (of the FBI)

Abstract

"IN PASSION AND IN HOPE" THE PILGRIMAGE OF A RADICAL AMERICAN WRITER MARTHA DODD STERN, 1933-1990

by

John F. Fox, Jr.

University of New Hampshire, September, 2001

This dissertation explores the literary/political pilgrimage of Martha Dodd Stern (1908-1990), an unusually promising writer. Using Martha's writings, government intelligence files like the Venona Transcripts. I develop a narrative and analytic family biography to analyze the faith of this leftist and develop a typology of the fellow traveler that shows its roots in the Progressive Era and their radicalization under the Great Depression and growth of fascism.

Martha's father, historian William E. Dodd (1869 to 1940), imparted to Martha his Wilsonian progressivism and resentment of social distinctions. Martha's experience in Nazi Germany (1933 to 1937) radicalized these roots. She placed her faith in the eschatological promise of Stalin. Unlike many fellow travelers, though, Martha became a Soviet agent while in Germany; her friends Mildred Harnack (1895 to 1943) and Soviet Boris Winogradow (ca.1895 to 1939) most influenced her. Martha returned to America in 1937, melding public anti-fascism and espionage.

Martha's writings and activism clearly show that her anti-fascism crucial to her commitment to the USSR. Her best selling memoir Through Embassy Eyes (1939) showed fascism's evil and Stalinism's promise. Ambassador Dodd's Diary, edited with brother Bill Dodd (1905 to 1940), and her novels, Sowing the Wind (1945) and The Searching Light (1954) also dealt with the fascist menace. Working with her husband Alfred Stern (1890 to 1986), Martha pressed the same points through political activism, especially in the 1948 Wallace campaign for president.

In 1947, Hollywood producer Boris Morros identified the Sterns as Soviet agents. The FBI's large-scale investigation included not only the Sterns but members of the Sterns' social network like Vito Marcantonio, Paul Robeson, The Hollywood Ten, and Henry Wallace. Although these investigations potentially threatened protected rights, the FBI legitimately pursued its targets.

In 1957, the Sterns fled to the East Bloc to avoid prosecution. Martha's continuing pilgrimage sought the realization of the Stalinist utopia but its reality crushed her faith. Martha's life illustrates how well intentioned leftists embraced Stalinism, supported the USSR, and influenced Cold War political culture in America.

Introduction

Martha Dodd Stern [1908 to 1990], an intelligent, vivacious, gifted writer, grew up in an elite, albeit economically middle-class, family. Her father, William Edward Dodd [1869 to 1940], a distinguished historian of the Ante-bellum South, raised Martha and her older brother Bill¹ on his democratic faith and Wilsonian progressivism. Along with this liberal, democratic faith, Dodd instilled in his children a resentment towards certain distinctions of class and society. Under the more radical influences of Carl Sandburg and Robert Morss Lovett, Martha's political position and commitments diverged from her father's, but it was Nazi Germany that forged Martha's radicalism.

Living in Germany between 1933 and 1937, Martha was heavily influenced by her friend, Mildred Harnack - an underground anti-fascist - and Martha's lover, Soviet diplomat Boris Winogradow.² These Communists deepened the effect of Sandburg's and Lovett's teachings. Under their influence, Martha placed her faith in a revolutionary vision, embodied, at first, by the Soviet Union and later by other revolutionary

¹ William Edward Dodd, Jr [1905 to 1940]. To distinguish father and son, Bill is used exclusively for the son; William, Ambassador Dodd, or Professor Dodd is used exclusively for the father.

² Boris's name has been transliterated into English in four different ways: Winogradov, Winogradow, Vinogradov, Vinogradow. To avoid confusion I use the form most commonly used by Martha, i.e. Winogradow, unless a different spelling is used in a quote from another source.

communist governments. This eastern alternative to the failure of the western liberal democracy became an icon to which she devoted her life. Many like Martha, especially intellectuals of her generation, shared a similar faith during this period of world struggle. Her belief, though, pressed her to be something more than most communists or fellow travelers, a witting, Soviet intelligence agent.³

Vehemently opposed to the Third Reich and committed to the USSR, Martha left Germany in December 1937. With her brother and new husband - Alfred Kaufman Stern [1890 to 1986] - Martha did all she could to oppose Nazism even as she supported diverse efforts to bring about the future promised by the Soviet Union. She did not advocate revolution in the United States, supporting, instead, other democratic reforms. In 1939, she published a best-selling memoir of her experience, Through Embassy Eyes, a strongly anti-fascist and equally strongly pro-Soviet work. With Alfred and Bill, Martha embarked on a successful public life of political activism and a less successful secret life in Soviet intelligence.

The newlyweds also cultivated a social calendar filled with parties and causes. The Sterns' 'salon' brought together fellow travelers, Communists, and diverse "progressives."⁴ At the same time, Martha maintained contact with Soviet intelligence

³ Distinctions between the various terms used to describe segments of the radical political left and Martha's position therein are discussed below.

⁴ "Progressive" in this context refers to the label that many Communists/fellow travelers/radicals used in the 1940's, 1950's. The term was appropriated in order to claim a share of the political respectability of liberals of the earlier Progressive Era, the late 1890's through World War I. When Progressive or its cognates appears in quotation marks, "", I refer to the communist usage of the term, otherwise it refers to the terms usage in the Progressive Era.

and, for a time, played a role in a NKVD spy ring.⁵ She recruited several persons to work for Soviet intelligence including her husband, her brother, and her friend Jane Foster. Martha and Alfred also invested in the Boris Morros Music Company [BMMC] with the intention of using the company as a cover for Soviet intelligence activities in the Western Hemisphere. After the company failed in 1944, the Sterns' activities on behalf of Soviet intelligence diminished and they only made sporadic contact over the next several years.

By this time, Bill and Alfred, and through them, Martha, had come to the attention of the Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI]. In 1941, the FBI began a domestic security investigation of Alfred Stern and, periodically, briefly checked on the status of his radical ties. Bill became the subject of a Hatch Act⁶ investigation starting in 1942. In 1944, as a result of this investigation, Congress effectively fired Bill from a position he held in the Federal Communications Commission. As he was now compromised, Soviet intelligence dropped Bill as an agent. The FBI's investigations of Alfred were of much less consequence in spite of the fact that FBI agents connected Alfred to subjects of the Bureau's two most significant pre-Cold War, Soviet espionage cases, ALTO and

⁵ Although commonly referred to as the KGB over the last forty or so years, the NKVD, the Foreign Intelligence section of the State Security Service of the USSR, was the name used by the organization when Martha was an active agent. It has had several names over its eighty-year history. Since Martha's active work in the United States was with the organization when it was called the NKVD, this term will be used throughout instead of the more common, KGB. For an overview of the history of this organization, the best single work is Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, The KGB: The Inside Story (New York: HarperCollins, 1990).

⁶ The Hatch Act forbade the federal employment of persons belonging to or subscribing to the views of groups advocating violent revolution.

COMRAP.⁷ Uninterested in pursuing these connections, the Bureau only perfunctorily checked its files on Alfred periodically and in early 1947, closed its file on him.

This proved premature. Within a matter of months, the Sterns' intelligence activities became a matter of active investigation by the FBI. Boris Morros, a charming, but shady Hollywood producer, identified the Sterns as Soviet Agents in June 1947 and reported to the FBI the Sterns' role in the BMMC. The FBI launched an intensive counterintelligence investigation into the Sterns' current and past activities. Its agents often watched the Sterns twenty-four hours a day. Their telephones were tapped, garbage searched, mail checked, and acquaintances queried. The Bureau was especially concerned because of the Sterns' connections to and influence over Henry Wallace, former vice-president from 1941 to 1945 and a presidential candidate in the 1948 national elections.

Between 1947 and 1949, the FBI's investigation of the Sterns, part of a much larger investigation named Operation MOCASE,⁸ ranged across the country and delved into the connections that hundreds of people had to Martha and Alfred. The Sterns' close connections to numerous fellow travelers, artists, entertainers, intellectuals, and politicians led to FBI scrutiny, either new or renewed, of these friends and acquaintances. Agents noted the relationships each person had to the Sterns in the files of the Bureau as clerks cross-indexed the information for later reference and collocation. FBI agents often

⁷ ALTO concerned secret messages between Soviet Agents involved in the aftermath of the Trotsky assassination in 1940 and the efforts to free his assassin. In COMRAP, the FBI investigated the Soviet Union's New York *Rezidentura*, or spy apparatus. Both are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 below.

⁸ MOCASE, short for Morros' Case, was the Bureau's in-house reference to the many investigations arising from Morros's testimony.

found themselves investigating the legitimate political activities of leftists connected to the Sterns as the Bureau tried to determine what, if any, role Soviet intelligence played in the political advocacy of those leftists. It was for this reason that the Sterns' social connections were monitored so intensely; the Bureau feared clandestine Soviet influence in America.

This intersection of foreign counterintelligence and domestic politics provides a secondary theme for this dissertation. Foreign intelligence and domestic politics may at times overlap and create a situation where counterintelligence investigations develop information on constitutionally protected activity. For example, Martha and Alfred, and others like them, played important roles in the American Labor Party, the formation of the Progressive Party of 1948, and Henry Wallace's 1948 presidential campaign. Their actions in these movements and others invited additional FBI scrutiny although most of those involved in the two parties or Wallace's campaign played no conscious role in Soviet intelligence operations.⁹ This investigation shows that these wide ranging investigations began from a legitimate predicate of suspicion and, although vigorously pursued, largely avoided compromising constitutionally held rights.

Still, the Stern case and the overarching MOCASE investigations show that the number of fellow travelers/communists/radicals actively involved in Soviet intelligence was small. In hind sight, it is easy to suggest that FBI investigations like these were too wide ranging. Still, the FBI was aware that many Soviet agents were active in the United States during the 1930's and the 1940's. It was not until the early fifties that information from the Venona decrypts appears to have suggested to the FBI that the number of such

⁹ The Sterns, John Abt, Michael Straight certainly had connections to Soviet intelligence.

agents was limited to several hundred, many of whom had already been neutralized.¹⁰

With this number of Soviet agents and a greater number of witting allies placed at strategic points in the social/political networks joining the diverse groups of the American left, suspicion of these movements appears reasonable.¹¹

This has become especially clear on account of the 1995 release of the Venona transcripts by the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] and National Security Agency [NSA]. These transcripts comprise several thousand intercepted, decrypted, and decoded cables sent from Soviet diplomatic establishments between 1940 and 1948. They provided a unique and significant window through which to view the efforts of Soviet intelligence between 1940 and 1948. The first information about the Sterns from Venona came to the FBI around 1948 when they were in the midst of aiding Henry Wallace's

¹⁰ The Venona Transcripts consist of a number of Soviet telegrams sent from Soviet diplomatic establishments to Moscow between the years 1938 and 1947 that were decrypted, in part, by American intelligence agencies. They are discussed in detail below and in Appendix 2. The source for my estimation on the number of Soviet agents is Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes, Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000, Appendix 1).

¹¹ Since this claim is hotly argued, the relevant historiography is developed in more detail in this introduction and the issue is developed in light of Martha's life in chapters 5 and 6. For a good summary of the opposing view, see Maurice Isserman and Ellen Schrecker, "The Right's Cold War Revisionism," The Nation, July 24/31, 2000, especially p.23. These historians denounce the anti-communist claim that "the Communist Party was purely and simply a criminal conspiracy." This, though, is largely a straw-man as those involved in the current debate, including this author, recognize that neither the CPUSA nor the far-left in general was purely or simply anything as it was a diverse and discordant group. Still, as this dissertation argues, there were elements of a criminal conspiracy between Soviet intelligence and too many leftists in 1930s and 1940s America, Martha and her family included.

campaign; the information was not new, but it significantly corroborated the testimony of a problematic source of information, Hollywood producer, Boris Morros.¹²

By 1950, the FBI investigation had revealed that the Sterns apparently were no longer active intelligence agents. The FBI scaled back its investigation, maintaining a small but steady effort to monitor whether the Sterns might become active again or whether they had intelligence connections yet unknown. The prospect of prosecuting the Sterns was debated every year or two. The FBI had to decide whether it was time to pass its findings to the Department of Justice [DOJ] to consider prosecuting the Sterns for their prior connections to Soviet intelligence or not.¹³ As Boris Morros remained an active FBI double agent through the mid-1950s, Headquarters delayed forwarding the matter to the DOJ for several years.

It delayed too long. In 1953, the Sterns moved to Mexico; Bill did not join them having died the year before. When the case was sent to the Department of Justice in 1956 and U.S. Attorney Gilchrist initiated a grand jury to examine the matter, the Sterns were out of immediate reach of the law. In July 1957, the government lost its chance to prosecute them permanently. Learning about a sealed indictment already produced against them, the Sterns fled to the East Bloc. Arriving in Prague, they proclaimed their joy at having reached the freedom of the socialist world and announced through the press that they looked forward to enjoying the blessings of the 'socialist world.' Denouncing

¹² For a detailed discussion of the Venona decrypts, their historiography, and their implication for American (and British and Australian) counterintelligence see Appendix 2.

¹³ It will be argued later, that, even in prosecuting the Sterns the FBI's interest was in developing intelligence about Soviet aims and methods more so than fitting placing guilty parties, i.e. Martha and Alfred, in jail.

their indictment as a frame-up, a McCarthy-like persecution, the Sterns claimed roles as martyrs for the anti-fascist cause.

The Sterns continued their pilgrimage, traveling around the communist world searching for the utopia that revolutionary Communism claimed to have created. For a time, they were happy, but by the end of the 1960's, after ten years under communist rule, they began to explore having the charges against them dropped so they could return to the United States. While living in Prague in 1968, the Sterns began to face the collapse of their faith as the Soviet Union crushed the Czech rebellion known as Prague Spring. Trapped in the East Bloc, loneliness, lack of freedom, illness, and disillusionment about life under the eastern regimes filled their last twenty-years. In 1978, the U.S government finally dropped the charges against them; sadly for them, a number of factors prevented their return home to the United States. Lonely and disappointed, the Sterns died in exile.

The greatest personal tragedy of the Sterns' exile was the effect it had on Martha's ability to write. Martha had been a promising writer before her exile. Many magazines and other literary venues published her short stories. Her first book, the memoir of her years in Germany titled Through Embassy Eyes, won many good reviews and became a best seller. Next she and Bill edited a version of their father's diaries published as Ambassador Dodd's Diary [Dodd's Diary, henceforth]. The work was acclaimed but controversial as it too became a best seller. Martha's novels received less public notice but the accolades were no less strong. Sowing the Wind, published in 1945, detailed the effects of fascism in Germany. Her last novel, The Searching Light, published in 1954, fictionalized the California loyalty oath controversy. Martha was already a writer of note

and talent when she fled, but that talent suggests she might have become an author of the first rank. Her pilgrimage muted that talent and ruined her potential

As the Sterns experienced life under revolutionary Communism, their faith in the Soviet ideal of "socialism in one nation" slowly withered. Immediately discouraged by the old revolution in the USSR, and even the more recent one in Czechoslovakia, they chased the "will-o-the-wisp" promised by the "young revolutions" first in Cuba, then in China. Discouraged even with these, they returned to Prague in 1968 where, three months later, the Soviets crushed the "Prague Spring." Their faith collapsed.

Under communist rule, Martha wrote nothing significant. For years, she had hoped to write a full account of her years in Germany as the culmination of her life's work. Sometime after 1970, she even made a good beginning by drafting "A Bright Journey Into Darkness" about her first four months with Boris Winogradow; it went no further. After Prague Spring, the only writings she finished were style edits on documents translated from Czech or Spanish into English. The reason for Martha's personal failure was two-fold: first, the reality of the conditions under which she lived; and second, the effect these conditions had on her faith in the Stalinist promise. Each of her previous works was highly personal in nature, either describing herself and her family outright, or fictionalizing them as characters in her novels. In America, Martha could write of herself and her dreams. She could express her faith in the future and her dismay and disgust regarding what she considered "fascism" in her homeland. Her faith had sustained her writing under the freedom of the west, but it could not do so in the confines of the Communist world.

Louis Fischer, an ex-Communist writer, and former suitor of Martha's, called such a collapse a "Kronstadt" after the effect that the 1921 massacre of loyal revolutionary sailors protesting the brutality and repression of the Bolshevik regime in Russia had on communists and other supporters of the Soviet Union. Fisher argued that a Kronstadt was "creative and socially valuable only when it represents a complete rejection of the methods of dictatorship and a conversion to the ideas of democracy."¹⁴ Had this happened for Martha, she might have been able to complete her planned *magnum opus*, a semi-fictionalized tribute to those she knew and loved in Germany and her experiences with them. Martha's "Kronstadt" came too late and, in the end, was incomplete. She was unable to move beyond her apostasy and recommit herself to a liberal faith like her father's. She found herself unable to pursue her dreams because of her lack of freedom and factors like age and health. The final decades of her life with Alfred were tragically disappointing.

A Typology of the Fellow Traveler

The lives of Martha, her husband, and her brother well illustrate the force and effect that faith in the promise of "socialism in one country" had on "numberless men and women of letters" in Richard Crossman's words. Crossman's seminal collection of essays, The God That Failed, attempted to describe how a generation of intellectuals embraced communism, whether fully as party members or partially as fellow travelers.¹⁵

¹⁴ Richard Crossman, ed., The God That Failed, (New York: Bantam Books, 1959), p.203.

¹⁵ "Socialism in one country" was a catch-phrase of the 1930's used by the USSR and its advocates to describe the role the USSR played in spearheading the coming of

Martha's life, it is argued, is emblematic of this generation and so allows us to consider how one intellectual came to place her faith in the eschatological promise of Stalinism. In analyzing this choice, a typology of the fellow traveler is developed, showing where Crossman and his essayists were right and where their argument must be amended for this influential group of intellectuals.

This examination is complicated by the fact that Martha was not only a fellow traveler, but something more too, an active Soviet agent (at least between 1934 and 1950). Martha's intelligence connections, in a sense, make her life illustrate more than simply the type of the fellow traveler. These aspects of Martha's life need to be delineated so that Martha's experience adequately expresses the uniqueness of her life while still addressing the typology of the fellow travelers of her generation. It is important, therefore, to consider briefly the application of several political labels that help us to situate Martha and her family.

In 1923, Leon Trotsky used the term "fellow travelers" to describe the "hesitant, doubt ridden" supporters of Marxism; he wondered how far they would travel with the Revolution. Trotsky captured this when he remarked that: "a whole generation of the 'left' intelligentsia has ... turned its eyes eastwards and has tied ... its fate not so much to the revolutionary working class as to a victorious revolution, which is not the same."¹⁶

world-wide communist revolution. It was akin to the Puritan image of Massachusetts Bay Colony as "a city on a hill," i.e. a beacon of hope and an example of the way to the righteous life for the world. "Numberless men and women..." comes from Richard Crossman's introduction in The God That Failed, p.2.

¹⁶ Quoted in David Caute, The Fellow Travellers: A Postscript to the Enlightenment, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973), p.3.

Richard Crossman has aptly collected and introduced six examples of intellectuals who became communists in the late 1920's and early 1930's. Crossman wanted to allow six writers to "recollect" their journey into communism and emergence therefrom. Crossman, in his introduction, noted several common things in the stories he collected: a loss of faith in western democracy; a willingness to sacrifice "bourgeoise liberties" to defeat fascism; exploded liberal fallacies about perpetual progress; and a "terrible loneliness" suffered because those so-called "premature anti-Facists" were so out-of- step with an apathetic public.¹⁷ Aspects of the backgrounds and actions of the six mirror much of Martha's intellectual and spiritual development; one, Louis Fischer, she dated for a while in the early 1930's. Still, as will be shown below, one may question how willing Martha was to give up her "liberties" and the depiction of "loneliness" does not seem adequate given her active social life and her close connections with anti-fascists even in Germany.

David Caute has suggested several elements in the phenomenology of the fellow traveler that appear more applicable to Martha and her family. Philosophically and theologically, fellow travelers were children of the Enlightenment, and though Caute does not develop this idea - they were children of the Progressive Era. They respectfully embraced scientific progress and rationalism and considered themselves above those backwards classes, which needed to be brought forward to enjoy life. A fellow traveler, therefore, welcomed social engineering of the peasant class in the USSR first, and later elsewhere, and found the primitivism of Russia, and then China, captivating. Still, these

¹⁷ Crossman, The God That Failed, p.3.

travelers were somewhat reticent about fully committing to Communism. In Lenin's words, they embraced a "me-too" Communism.¹⁸

The criteria Cate suggests as characteristic of the typology of the fellow traveler are, in significant ways, developments from the Progressivism of an earlier generation. The Progressives, although a diverse and contradictory group, are associated with the period between 1895 and 1920. They too embraced rationality and scientific progress. They sought social improvement through efficiency, education, and democratic reform. And they began to look to state and national government organizations to address wider social problems. This may be summed up by an analogy: the fellow traveler is to the Progressive as the "red diaper baby"/New Leftist is to the Old Left.¹⁹

Though the continuities between fellow travelers and Progressives are strong, the discontinuities cannot be forgotten. Although often marked by racism and social coercion, the Progressives did not suggest the wholesale reengineering of the poorer classes that the fellow travelers accepted in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the Progressives were not as atheistic a group as the fellow travelers were. Those involved in the Social Gospel movement usually believed in an all-powerful God; the fellow traveler, it will be argued, held a sentimental attachment to Christian social justice without a

¹⁸ Ibid., pp.1-3.

¹⁹ The literature on this period is, of course, large. Solid introductions may be found in Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, Progressivism (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1983; Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877-1920 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), and Daniel T. Rodgers, "In Search of Progressivism," Reviews in American History 10, (December 1982, pp.113-32. On "red diaper babies" see Judi Kaplan and Linn Schapiro, ed., Red Diaper Babies: Children of the Left (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

concomitant faith in Christ.²⁰ Lastly, the fellow traveler was conflicted in a manner the Progressive was not; they embraced democratic rights in their own countries while welcoming revolutionary violence elsewhere.

"Fellow traveler," then, indicates both an ideological depth and commitment to faith in the communist eschaton - the vision of the "Kingdom of God" or the end of humanity. These "me-to-communists" embraced the Soviet Union as the realization of this horizon even as they claimed a contradictory faith in democracy and freedom; for those who remained under western rule, this dichotomy was resolved by holding the Soviet Union to be free and democratic. For a true communist the values of "freedom" and "democracy" were part of a society's super-structure, i.e. part of the false consciousness embraced by the bourgeoisie. They might be used as political or rhetorical weapons, and were so used to lure people like Martha into faith in the Soviet end, but these values were not to be embraced as ends in themselves. Revolution and revolutionary terror, not gradualism, were the means of achieving Marx's vision. The Soviets violently argued against the "heresy" that the path to the communist eschaton could be found through any means other than the dictatorship of the proletariat.

There was, then, a contradiction at the heart of the fellow traveler between their embrace of liberal democratic values and their lionization of promise of revolutionary communism. Of necessity, this contradiction was ignored and the fellow traveler's

²⁰ On the Social Gospel see Robert T. Handy, "Protestant Theological Tensions and Political Styles in the Progressive Period," in Mark T. Noll, ed., Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980's (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). William R. Hutchison, The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), is also useful given its description of modernism in religious thought at the turn of the century.

beatific vision of Stalinist Russia was not questioned although it was later supplanted by a similar vision of Cuba and then China.

Raymond Aron has made an important observation about this dichotomy. In describing Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, two noted fellow travelers, he said that they were “not Marxists – they [had] no wish to give up any of *their* freedom but by philosophical means they [justified] other men’s deprivation of liberty at the hands of totalitarianism and Terror.”²¹ The Sterns embraced the same contradiction; unlike Sartre and de Beauvoir, though, their actions against the regime of the United States led them to live in exile under communist rule; rather than simply dreaming of the “Kingdom” from afar, they lived in it and lost their faith as a result of their experience.

If this judgement appears harsh, it is not mitigated by noting, as one must, the tragic ends of so many fellow travelers. This is the sadness behind the lives and careers of Martha and Alfred Stern and, of course, those like them. They praised freedom, supported progress, and wanted to cure the ills of society. They fought oppression, devoted their lives to bearing witness to academic freedom, civil rights, civil liberties, and social and political justice. Yet, over the course of their lives, they supported tyrannies that denied freedom literally to billions of people and executed upwards of 90 million persons in their quest to destroy social classes so that the state could wither away as communist theory predicted.²² Eugene Genovese was correct to note that simply arguing that the right has its oppressors and corpses throughout history is not a sufficient

²¹ Raymond Aron, edited by Daniel J. Mahoney, In Defense of Political Reason: Essays by Raymond Aron (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), p.118.

²² See Stephen Courtois et al., The Black Book of Communism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) for a summary of the death toll amassed by Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot and other communist leaders.

answer to the ravages of Communism in the twentieth century.²³ The failing of the fellow travelers was that they were so aghast at the splinter in their neighbor's eye that they ignored the plank in their own.

Although these characteristics certainly describe Martha, Alfred, and Bill, a problem arises in applying the term "fellow traveler" because of their intelligence activity. Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel have succinctly described the Soviet Union's application of the term, which is rejected in this dissertation. The Soviets, according to Romerstein and Breindel, identified three groups: Communists, non-Party Bolsheviks, and fellow travelers. The non-Party Bolsheviks constituted a group as deeply committed to the Soviet Union as the Communists, but "for personal reasons," did not commit to Party membership. Romerstein and Breindel state that fellow travelers were not trusted enough to be involved in Soviet espionage, only communists and non-party Bolsheviks were.²⁴

Where, then, does this leave us in identifying the Sterns and Bill Dodd as fellow travelers? Colloquial usage of "fellow traveler" in the United States suggests Martha and her family fit this category although, at times, their commitment and activities define them as non-Party Bolsheviks, progressives, or oftentimes, simply New Deal liberals. When they were indicted, the New York Daily News and the New York Journal

²³ Eugene Genovese, "The Question," reprinted in The Southern Front: History and Politics in the Cultural War (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1995). See Dissent, Summer 1994, for responses from several historians to Genovese's claims. The Fall 1994 issue contains more responses.

²⁴ Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel, The Venona Secrets: Exposing Soviet Espionage and America's Traitors (Chicago: Regnery, 2000), pp.11-12.

American referred to them as fellow travelers; most papers simply called them accused spies.²⁵

Thus, even as Martha, Alfred, and Bill, worked for Soviet intelligence, their lives, their connections, and their commitments suggest that, intellectually and sentimentally, they were fellow travelers. The influence of William Dodd retained such a strong imprint on them that, theoretically at least, they remained democrats in the Progressive tradition. Furthermore, the line between non-Party Bolshevik and fellow traveler was so blurred in the cases of Martha, Alfred and Bill that it was meaningless; for this reason, the lives of Martha and her family are examined in order to learn about the place that the fellow travelers held in American culture and politics. They embraced a belief in scientific rationalism, progress, and the promise of Stalinist Russia. As noted too, they held to the sentiments of the old Social Gospel pursuit of heaven on earth and embraced the democratic rights in much the same sense. They held these characteristics in the same way as those intellectuals who had accepted and rejected membership in the communist party like the essayists in Crossman's, The God That Failed, and those intellectuals who made less of a commitment to the USSR, thus falling into the category of fellow traveler.

Through the lives of Martha and her family, it may also be shown how closely Soviet intelligence and the far-left were allied in many cases. Oftentimes, this relationship is either rejected a priori or accepted in a similar manner. By examining Martha's life and experiences, along with those of Alfred and Bill, this dissertation explores the development of the faith of the fellow traveler and its manifestation in the fellow traveler's commitments. It also examines the conflict these commitments created

²⁵ "Journey's End for Two Fellow-Travelers," New York Daily News, 9/1/1957, p.10; "Millionaire Rats," New York Journal American, 8/31/1957, p.20.

between the federal government and those who held them. Their lives may be taken as microcosms of the passion and hope of the old-left in America. During their lives, Martha and Alfred Stern gained only minor celebrity and, at best, proved to be ineffective Soviet agents. Still, their experience directly relates to the historiographical and political debates about the meaning of the Cold War, Communism in American politics, and government action against radical dissenters.

The Historiographical Contexts Addressed Here

The issues and problems described above have unearthed the conundrum of the fellow traveler and American responses to such supporters of the Soviet Union. As Martha's life spans the entire Cold War, and those of her family, cover significant parts of this conflict, the events discussed in this dissertation illuminate the connection of the fellow traveler to American liberalism and progressivism, the role of FBI counterintelligence in our democratic republic, and the effects of the clash of these on our political culture. In short, the life of Martha Dodd Stern serves as an example in microcosm of many significant issues during the Cold War and the problem of American liberties versus the threat of foreign intelligence.

Before examining those debates that touch most directly upon the lives of the Sterns, the role of communism in America and the contentious debates over its historiography should be presented. These debates provide the overarching frame in which the debate about fellow travelers, Soviet espionage, and Martha and her family emerges.

The debate about the nature and place of U.S. communists has lasted as long as there have been communists in America, but its historiography clearly begins with the work of the Fund for the Republic, a liberal anti-communist group that supported several important studies of the rise of the Communist Party of the United States [CPUSA], its growth and its development. The tone for these studies was set by Theodore Draper whose book, The Roots of American Communism,²⁶ has been influential since its publication. Draper argued that the CPUSA was a creature of Moscow and that the sporadic, short lived efforts at "americanization" appeared and were subsumed to the will of the USSR.

For a time Draper's work stood unchallenged except by doctrinaire communists. With the rise of the New Left school of historiography, though, the role of the CPUSA came in for a reevaluation. Many of these historians traced their intellectual and genetic roots back to parents who had been members of the CPUSA. Looking to find a usable past to prod, support, and advance radical activism in the 1960's, these historians sought to recover the individuality of those who participated in the communist movement. While the leadership of the CPUSA in the 1960's was ignored, the histories of older communists were sought in the hope of finding affirmation for the things the New Left sought in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As Maurice Isserman, a later practitioner in this

²⁶ (New York: Viking Press, 1957). This was the first of a series of studies of American communism; see Maurice Isserman, Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party During the Second World War (Wesleyan, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), for a complete listing of the works in this series. None is directly applicable to this study as the CPUSA plays little role in these matters, other than the friendship of the Sterns with Earl and Bill Browder and other CPUSA functionaries. Since the nature of this relationship does not appear in the extant sources, it is noted only in passing. More investigation, it is hoped, will illustrate why the Sterns socialized with such high ranking communists in more detail.

genre noted, "they focused on those brief moments when actual party practice conformed to what they believed was proper revolutionary behavior."²⁷

Isserman, though, takes a more detached approach although he too seeks to make the history of American communism useful to today's activists. He criticizes his fellow New Left historians for suggesting that one period or another in the history of the CPUSA was standard, but that those periods where the CPUSA acceded to the dictates of the USSR were aberrations. Against this treatment, he opposes a generational approach. He treats the CPUSA as a continuous organization in the process of becoming rather than as frozen in a static moment in history. Through this social history approach, Isserman attempts to portray the CPUSA "without sentimentality or apology." He disagrees with suggestion that a moment in the life of the CPUSA was seminal, but holds to the New Left attempts to find a usable past in the lives of their parents.

In response to this New Left attempt to look to the CPUSA's past for guidance, a new anti-Communist school has arisen. A leader in this approach is Harvey Klehr who has had a running debate with Isserman for many years. Klehr's The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade,²⁸ develops and updates the thesis of Draper and so falls in line with the old liberal anti-Communists. Klehr returns to the argument that the Party's successes and failures can be traced to the domination of the Soviet Communist Party through the Comintern [Communist International]. His

²⁷ Isserman, Which Side Were You On?, p.xi. Authors he cites for this approach include James Green, "Working Class Militancy in the Depression," Radical America, VI (November-December 1972) and Staughton Lynd, "The United Front in America: A Note," Radical America, VIII, July-August 1974.

²⁸ Harvey Klehr, The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

argument is not new, but it draws on the latest available sources at the time he wrote and so added depth and nuance to his portrayal. Klehr argued that in spite of great opportunity - the lack of Party schisms, the fascist menace, a lack of systemic government suppression, and economic conditions that were opportune for the promulgation of the communist message, the Party failed. This failure can only be laid at the door of the Party and its Soviet masters who did not allow it the opportunity to address the situation in America.

The debate between Isserman and Klehr continues even today, although some of the previous givens of the debate have given way in light of new evidence. It is in the context of these changes in the debate that it begins to touch on the issues discussed here. Both sides now accept the existence of Soviet agents in America, some from the Communist Party itself, others from its allies on the far left. Both accept that the USSR exerted considerable, controlling pressure on the CPUSA and its policies such that it was never free of Soviet constraint. The terms of the debate now center on the meaning of McCarthyism and the role that the federal government played in dealing with communists and their allies. And in framing it in this sense, I grant choice of playing field to Isserman and his frequent co-debater, Ellen Schrecker.

The lines of this debate are ably presented in a review that Schrecker and Isserman wrote of a National Archives conference on the legacy of Joseph McCarthy held on the fiftieth anniversary of his Wheeling, West Virginia, speech at which he denounced 204 or so communist moles in the State Department.²⁹ Noting that no

²⁹ The conference was held in Washington, D.C. on February 9, 2000. This author was in attendance. Isserman and Schrecker discussed the conference in the "The Rights Cold War Revisionism." Both historians presented at the conference although they do not comment on the papers they presented.

presenter "rehabilitated" McCarthy, many, especially McCarthy biographer Arthur Herman, argued that recent access to new sources has tended to "vindicate McCarthy's original charges." Against this, Isserman and Schrecker note that the new materials cut both ways, vindicating, for example, Robert Oppenheimer and Owen Lattimore, and that McCarthy, famed red-hunter that he was, never produced an actual spy himself. Still, although McCarthy remains discredited, they note a strong rise in liberal anti-communism.³⁰

This worries Isserman and Schrecker as "Cold War liberalism did not, in fact, "get it right," if getting it right means cherishing and protecting fundamental democratic principles in a time of hysteria."³¹ They condemn liberals like Hubert Humphrey for failing to "challenge the heart of McCarthy's rationale: that the Communist Party was purely and simply a criminal conspiracy whose members had forfeited any claim to civil liberties."³² Furthermore, they suggest, the fear of spies was out of proportion to the espionage that existed; this observation, though, benefits from hindsight and fails to consider how many spies are too many. Still, Schrecker and Isserman are right to worry about the stereotype that because some communists and their allies are spies, therefore all communists and their allies may be spies. This, though, also works in hindsight better than in practice and certainly better than it worked itself out in the early years of the Cold War discussed in detail in this dissertation.

³⁰ This group, in spite of Isserman's and Schrecker's label, should include both liberal and neo-conservative anti-communists. It is inappropriate, albeit revealing, that their title suggests both groups are of the "Right."

³¹ Isserman and Schrecker, "The Rights Cold War Revisionism," The Nation, p.23.

³² Ibid.

In the end, Isserman and Schrecker suggest, the anti-Communists "lack any sense of context and nuance," and are hampered by an animus towards the radicals of the sixties. The left, they admit, must do without some illusions, but the right must not delude itself with "a shining account of anti-Communist virtue either."³³ The ground in the debate over the role of Soviet intelligence in the United States has clearly shifted from guilt or innocence to whether the actions of the government and the role of anti-Communists in these actions was justified.

The lives of Martha, her husband, and her brother confront us with these issues of historiographical and political debate. In the pages that follow, these issues are examined through the pilgrimage Martha and her family took, the people they encountered on this journey, and the actions they took both in legitimate activism and illegal intelligence work. This pilgrimage suggests that Isserman and Schrecker are right in asking that context and nuance be applied to those of the far-left and they are also correct in noting that McCarthy's wide-ranging aspersions threatened the rights of his targets, the rights we claim as Americans. Still, to suggest that most anti-communists did not cherish these rights is a straw-man, not an historical argument, and so too is the suggestion that Soviet intelligence, working with and through the CPUSA, was not a criminal conspiracy. The context and nuance Isserman and Schrecker call for is needed on both sides. The story of Martha Stern's tragic pilgrimage is presented in this dissertation to addresses some of these debates raised by Isserman and Schrecker.

Through a consideration of Martha's life and career, this dissertation addresses not only the allegations of the Sterns' guilt but the charges against the American government

³³ Ibid., p.24.

and the anti-communists too. Martha's life, work, and experience, then, allow us to understand of both her uniqueness and her personification of the fellow traveler, the outlines of this type having been suggested earlier.

Furthermore, an analysis of the government's efforts against Martha and her family similarly enables us to address the issue of how the nation should balance security and liberty. As a nation has a right and a responsibility to protect itself and its citizens from threats, and as a nation has need to maintain secrets to protect itself, the investigation of suspected intelligence agents is clearly warranted. In a democratic republic, though, these legitimate investigations must be conducted in a manner that properly protects the rights of the citizens of the republic. Over the past fifty years, much public debate has arisen over the procedures the government should use in pursuing such investigations. Especially since 1975, checks and balances have been placed on the exercise of FBI investigations, especially those related to intelligence matters. Although we may regret that these were not enacted earlier, even by these current standards, the infringements of the Sterns' freedom by the FBI between 1941 and 1957 were largely, though not always, legitimate.

The Stern Case in These Debates

Keeping in mind, these general debates as framed by Isserman and Schrecker, let us discuss the issues that arise in attempting to understand Martha's pilgrimage. Martha's life has been a subject of debate, albeit minor, from at least the 1950's. From the left, friends, acquaintances, and others remembered Martha as a pre-mature anti-fascist

hounded to a miserable exile's life and a lonely death by an intolerant, intrusive, immoral, secretive government.

Sylvia Crane, a long-time radical activist and friend of the Sterns, proposed that the Sterns' experience was the first of the COINTELPRO operations engaged in by the FBI.³⁴ Crane argued that there was a "McCarthyist plot to demonstrate the existence of treason in high places." McCarthy, Crane argued, had planned a hearing of his Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations before which he would call Martha. Crane suggested that because "Martha [was] the daughter of an Ambassador," McCarthy singled her out to embarrass the State Department.³⁵ Crane thus tied the Stern case to the domestic political battle over the relationship between some members of the New Deal and the Truman Administration to Soviet espionage.³⁶

To Crane, the Sterns were innocent. It was solely on account of their left-wing politics and activism that they came to the attention of the FBI, suffered infringements against their rights, and were hounded from the country. Simply put, Martha and Alfred were selected for persecution in order to disparage the New Deal and the political left in general.

³⁴ COINTELPRO, short for Counterintelligence Program, were a series of efforts by the FBI to take active efforts to disrupt radical groups of the Left and the Right. The first was initiated in 1956 against the Communist Party of the United States. Crane made these arguments at a "Memorial Meeting for Alfred K. Stern," 11/19/1986. A transcript of this meeting may be found in the Martha Dodd Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁵ "Memorial Meeting for Alfred K. Stern," 11/19/1986, Martha Dodd Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁶ In presenting this hypothesis, Crane included herself as she too was called before the McCarthy Committee at this time and she too was the daughter of an American ambassador.

The scholarly form of this argument may be found in work of Norman Markowitz, although he does not deal with the Stern case specifically. Markowitz argued that those who claimed those accused of spying and similar activities were guilty simply reasserted anti-Communism under a new name. Markowitz also attacked those who argued from a New Left perspective. He berated those who argued that the vast majority of the far left was simply well intentioned reformers, although some few must be admitted to be spies as charged.

Not surprisingly, Markowitz also condemns the Neo-anticommunists who suggest that a significant number of communists and radicals were spies and that the loyalty of communists *qua* communists was suspect. Both those arguing from a New Left position and those arguing from a Neo-Anticommunist position, Markowitz argues, are deluded about western imperialism and use the straw men of "Stalinism" and Communist spies to disparage Communism. "The historical background of proletarian internationalism, its logic and accomplishments", Markowitz argues, simply have no meaning for either the non-Marxist Left or the political Right.³⁷ Markowitz implies that any charge of espionage, *a priori*, is simply a justification of the persecution of advocates of radical change in the United States.

In spite of Markowitz's condemnation of the New Left approach as simply a milder anticommunism, it is actually closer to his own position than that of the new-anticommunist or old right historiographical position. Katrina Vanden Heuvel's discussion of the Sterns in *The Nation* embodies a good example of the New Left approach. In eulogizing Martha, she wrote:

³⁷ Norman Markowitz, "The New Cold War 'Scholarship'," Political Affairs, 62 (October 1983), pp. 6 to 14.

As with so many cold war espionage cases, the Sterns' involves more questions than answers. What led Martha and her husband to flee the United States and spend the rest of their lives in exile? Did they fear they would not receive a fair trial amid the anticommunist hysteria of the era? Were the charges of espionage true? When the indictment was dismissed, the Sterns said their case was "a frame-up from beginning to end."

Ms. Vanden Heuvel implies that the case against the Sterns might have been a "frame-up." The question raised in this approach is not "to what degree did the Sterns assist the Soviet tyranny," but, "how badly the United States government treated them for their efforts."³⁸

If all that was written accusing the Sterns' of espionage were the handful of sensationalistic first-hand accounts of the incidents written by or with those involved in Soviet espionage with the Sterns, one might be inclined to agree with Markowitz. Works in this vein include Jane Foster's An Un-American Lady, Boris Morros's My Ten Years as a Counterspy, and serial articles ghosted for Boris Morros and Jack Soble.³⁹ These works, although sometimes correct on the major details, tend to be self-serving if not deceptive. More salacious and possibly less accurate works include lurid spy accounts like Donald Bower's Sex Espionage.⁴⁰ These, though, are not the only works on the matter.

³⁸ Katrina vanden Heuvel, "Martha Dodd Stern," The Nation, September 24, 1990. See also Ms. vanden Heuvel's lengthier treatment in "Grand Illusions," Vanity Fair, 9/1991.

³⁹ Boris Morros with Bill Davidson, Look Magazine, Vol. 21, No. 24, 11/26/ 1957 and vol. 21, No. 25, 12/10/1957; Boris Morros with Charles Samuels, My Ten Years as a Counterspy (New York: Viking, 1959), and Jack Soble with Jack Lotto, "How I Spied for the Soviets," The New York Journal American, 11/10/1957 to 11/21/1957.

⁴⁰ Donald E. Bower, Sex Espionage (New York: Knightsbridge, 1990).

Old and New Left historians in recent years have had to deal with a mass of new information that tends to support the claims of anticommunists and neo-Conservatives the guilt of Cold War figures like Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs, the central role the leadership of the Communist Party of the United States played in aiding Soviet intelligence efforts. On the other hand, the new evidence tends to support these historians in their argument that, in raw numbers, there were few spies.

Historians Ellen Schrecker and Maurice Isserman have made these arguments most forcefully. In dealing with Soviet espionage, these historians admit that some Communists were guilty of espionage. For example, Schrecker accepted Allen Weinstein's description of Martha as a spy in his recent book with Alexander Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood.⁴¹ Still, in Schrecker's opinion and that of other New Left historians, Soviet intelligence was an insignificant threat, therefore the cure administered by the federal government - intensive investigation of radicals, loyalty programs, and, of course McCarthy's excesses -was worse than the illness itself. Schrecker and Isserman conclude, therefore, that Communists, fellow travelers, and "progressives," as a group, should not have been presumed disloyal and, therefore, there is little justification for suspicion of them or exclusion of them from federal employment.⁴²

Arguments by New Left historians like Schrecker and Isserman, therefore, raise an issue central to the historiography of Communism and its devotees in this country.

⁴¹ Allen Weinstein and Alexei Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America (New York: Random House, 1999).

⁴² See Ellen Schrecker, review of The Haunted Wood, by Allen Weinstein and Alexei Vassiliev, in "The Spies Who Loved Us," The Nation, May 24, 1999; Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998), and Schrecker and Isserman, "The Right's Cold War Revisionism," pp.24-26.

How complicit were the Communists, the fellow travelers, and even the far-left New Dealers, in Soviet intelligence operations? Were they disloyal to the American Republic? The answers to these questions are important because they deal directly with whether the actions of the United States, in general, against these individuals were defensible. The problem illustrates the same divide between center-right to right and center-left to left.

On the anticommunist side, one finds that the Stern case constitutes an extended footnote to many overviews of Soviet espionage written from a perspective less favorable to the connections between the far left and the Soviet Union. Several congressional reports and other government publications note aspects of this case.⁴³ George Carpozi's Red Spies in the US, Norman Thomas's The Great Spy Ring, and Herbert Romerstein and Stanislav Levchenko's The KGB Versus the Main Enemy devote several chapters each to the case.⁴⁴ Only Romerstein's and Levchenko's work appears based on original research and so it is of the most use of the three.

Since the 1975 amendments to the Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts access to American intelligence records has provided a wealth of new information that

⁴³ U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Un-American Activities, "International Communism (Espionage): Excerpts of Consultation with Counterspy Boris Morros (August 16, 1957), Reprint of series of articles by Representative Francis E. Walter appearing in The Philadelphia Enquirer, September 29-October 3, 1957," 85th Congress, 1st Session and U.S., Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, "Expose of Soviet Espionage, May 1960, prepared by the Federal Bureau of Investigation," 86th Congress, 2nd Session., 1960.

⁴⁴ George Carpozi, Red Spies in the US (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington Books, 1973); Norman Lucas, The Great Spy Ring (London: Barrow, 1966); and Herbert Romerstein and Stanislav Levchenko, The KGB Versus the Main Enemy: How Soviet Intelligence Service Operates Against the United States (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989). These three books are not written by academics. Only Romerstein and Levchenko append a scholarly apparatus to their work.

both sides have used to bolster their arguments. On the whole, works by former leftists turned neo-conservative (more accurately, neo-anticommunists) have tended to find the many of the high profile accused of the Cold War guilty. Basing his argument on access to tens of thousands of pages of FBI files, Allen Weinstein concluded that Alger Hiss was guilty and that Whittaker Chambers was generally accurate in his charges; Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton found the Rosenbergs guilty.⁴⁵ And New Left historian Gary May concluded that William Remington was guilty of perjury, at least about his past communist connections.⁴⁶

The brief thaw in access to Russian archives since the collapse of the USSR has lent even more vigor to the argument that those accused of espionage were guilty, the Communist Party of the United States of America (at least its leadership) was a conspiracy against the democratic nations, and the damage done by those who put their faith in the Soviet Union was significant.

Weinstein has been a major voice in this neo-anticommunist school. The Russian government granted Weinstein, and several others, access to information from certain NKVD files as part of a deal with an American publisher that paid for this access.⁴⁷ The

⁴⁵ Allen Weinstein found Alger Hiss guilty as charged in Perjury: The Hiss Chambers Case (New York: Knopf, 1978). Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton did the same for Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in, The Rosenberg File: A Search for the Truth (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1983). Neither book dealt with the Stern Case although many of the issues addressed are similar and each has been strongly criticized by certain segments on the left.

⁴⁶ Gary May, Un-American Activities: The Trials of William Remington (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁴⁷ Amy Knight has criticized this aspect of Weinstein's book, but, distasteful as the prospect of having to pay for access to records is to American historians used to the freedoms of this country, in and of itself, the fact that Weinstein and his publisher paid

archives of the Comintern, including the papers of the CPUSA, were opened to researchers on a less mercenary basis. U.S. intelligence materials including the uniquely valuable Venona Transcripts, a series of Soviet cables decoded by the U.S. government, have also proved of immense help in understanding Soviet intelligence operations just before the Cold War. In two chapters of their book, The Haunted Wood - Soviet Espionage in America - The Stalin Era, Weinstein and Vassiliev brought this information to bear on the case of Martha Dodd Stern. In these chapters, he shows that Martha was a witting Soviet intelligence agent. Works by Nigel West, Herbert Romerstein, and John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr make similar use of new evidence.⁴⁸

These works have not been without their critics. Amy Knight has presented the most extensive critique, especially of Weinstein's and Vassiliev's work. Knight begins by developing a criticism of process by which Weinstein and the others obtained their data. She denounces the monetary deal that was made between the publishers of these works and an organization of former Soviet intelligence officers for access to information from the KGB archives. She further criticizes the arrangement by which these authors were given only summaries of materials selected by Russian intelligence agents that will be unverifiable for the foreseeable future. She correctly notes that both aspects of this

Russian intelligence has nothing to do with the validity of the information. See note 49, this chapter, below.

⁴⁸ Nigel West, Venona: The Greatest Secret of the Cold War (London: Harper Collins, 1999); Nigel West and Oleg Tsarev, The Crown Jewels: The British Secrets at the Heart of the KGB Archive (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Romerstein and Breindel, The Venona Secrets; John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, The Secret World of American Communism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Haynes and Klehr, The Soviet World of American Communism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); and Haynes and Klehr, Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

provenance are fraught with problems and make the data suspect. Thus, this information is analogous to a sample-of-convenience and necessitates careful and critical treatment. Knight concludes that "these materials should not be rejected out of hand, because they are all we have ...[still], read between the lines and consider the source." She is absolutely correct.⁴⁹ The evidence developed throughout this dissertation circumstantially supports Weinstein's and Vassiliev's information, but little that is new in Haunted Wood is directly confirmed by my research.

Given these concerns, a few words need to be made on the relevance of Weinstein's work to this work. It will be noted that Weinstein is used to provide significant detail about Martha's experience in Germany between 1934 and 1937, especially as to her recruitment as a Soviet agent. In analyzing Weinstein's and Vassiliev's material, it should be noted that where their information was novel, specifically their descriptions of the contents of NKVD reports of meetings with Martha, I found much correlation between The Haunted Wood and FBI files on the Sterns, but no direct corroboration of these new details.⁵⁰ My data fit well together with Weinstein's and Vassiliev's and everything they present about the Sterns is at least plausible. Their data, therefore, is accepted as valid as I have no reason to reject it.

⁴⁹ Amy Knight, "The Selling of the KGB," Wilson Quarterly, Winter 2000. Ellen Schrecker made similar arguments in her review of The Haunted Wood, "The Spies Who Loved Us?"

⁵⁰ The most significant is the mention of Martha approaching Soviet Diplomat Valentin Sorokin about a request by Henry Wallace to Martha. Wallace had asked her to help write his speeches and Martha asked Sorokin what he thought. This event is confirmed by FBI wiretaps of the Stern's that revealed a conversation between Martha and Sorokin on this matter. See Weinstein and Vassiliev, Haunted Wood, p.67 and FBI Letter, Director to SAC Gleason, New Haven, 9/22/1947, 100-57453-65.

In summary, then, the anticommunist argument has become much stronger over the years, even as it continues to bear the stigma from Joseph McCarthy's excesses in the early to mid-1950s. The evidence suggests that the Soviet intelligence effort against the United States was significant. The CPUSA leadership,⁵¹ their fellow travelers, and non-party Bolsheviks played an important role in Soviet intelligence against the United States. Isserman and Schrecker correctly note that most Americans who drifted through the CPUSA were not involved in espionage. They are wrong in exonerating them entirely from suspicion and blame. In the context of the events of the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's, this suspicion and blame were reasonable reactions to what the government and the public knew about Soviet espionage, at least in the years immediately following World War II. Clearly several hundred Communists and fellow travelers, a small but significant number, were directly complicit in Soviet intelligence actions against the United States. Several times this number were involved in a number of interrelated but disparate conspiracies.⁵² The research developed here confirms the relationships between Soviet intelligence and a wider community of the far left that was, at times, complicit in Soviet efforts, even as due consideration is given to the New Left critiques of the anti-Communist argument. Given the Sterns' commitments to Soviet intelligence and their wide circles of friends, acquaintances and activities, this dissertation deals with not only

⁵¹ Schrecker and Isserman, "The Right's Cold War Revision," pp.22-24.

⁵² Although no damage assessments detailing what specific Soviet spies gave to the USSR have been made available to the public, the potential for damage from Soviet agents like Alger Hiss and others was great. The Soviets did make great use of technological intelligence gained both legitimately through open-sources and the Lend-Lease Program and illegally from espionage. The USSR record with political and military intelligence is much worse as Stalin was too paranoid and his corps too sycophantic to make good use of such intelligence.

with the interrelationship of the different individuals and groups of the far left in New Deal and Cold War America but also the relationship between these groups and Soviet intelligence.

This dissertation also touches tangentially on several other important issues in the historiography of the Cold War. The first problem is that of defining anti-communism. Schrecker expands the term's meaning beyond the period between McCarthy's Wheeling, West Virginia speech (February 9, 1950) and the Senate censure of McCarthy (December 2, 1954). In her work, "McCarthyism" encompasses not only the nearly five years of McCarthy's crusade, but also periods before and after his years of notoriety. For her, "McCarthyism includes all periods when Americans feared a Communist menace and the American government actively sought to expel Communists and other radicals from positions of trust in government and society, i.e. most of the Cold War. Against this, Richard Gid Powers correctly notes that expanding McCarthyism to encompass all anti-communism is unjustified. Instead, Powers proposed that many anti-communists were honorable persons and should not be so readily demonized; in this he parallels Schrecker's and Isserman's call for an end to blanket censures of Communists.⁵³

The New Left approach raises another important question: did Cold War anti-Communists cherish and protect the fundamental democratic principles of our nation in a time of hysteria, victims of a "witch hunt"? Or, as follows from the anti-Communist arguments, were they simply raising these issues to further hide their subversive acts and appear as martyrs to a higher cause? The importance of this question is shown by the force and prominence of these debates even after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the

⁵³ Richard Gid Powers, Not Without Honor: A History of Anti-Communism in America (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

end of the Cold War. Few months go by without articles and book reviews on these or related issues appearing in our journals of opinion: The Nation, The National Review, The New Republic, The New York Times Book Review, The Weekly Standard and many others.⁵⁴

This work, therefore, also considers the Stern investigation as an example of a counterintelligence operation against the Soviet Union in the context of the constitutional rights guaranteed to all American citizens. This is important because it raises the question of whether or not a democratic republic can simultaneously protect itself against threats from enemies and from ideologies that are antithetical to its own well being, while still protecting democratic rights. The answer, as seen through this dissertation, is yes. Even though, the FBI at times pursued its investigation of the Sterns where it touched on legitimate political activity, theirs and other's, the FBI's counterintelligence investigation was necessary and appropriate.

Lastly, the experience of Martha Stern returns us to the more personal drama of this Cold War case. In her best-selling memoir, Through Embassy Eyes, Martha revealed herself as an appealing, intelligent, talented, but contradictory young woman. Alfred and Bill are less appealing personalities, but share much in common with Martha with regards

⁵⁴ Walter Schneir and Miriam Schneir, "Cables Coming in From the Cold," The Nation, July 5, 1999; Schrecker and Isserman, The Right's Cold War Revision; Paul Buhle, "Lovestone's Thin Red Line," The Nation, May 24, 1999; Ellen Schrecker, "The Spies Who Loved Us?"; James T. Patterson, "The Enemy Within," The Atlantic Monthly, October 1998; Amy Knight, "The Selling of the KGB"; Ronald Radosh, Truths and Excuses, The New Republic, January 3, 2000; Thomas Powers, "The Plot Thickens," The New York Review of Books; Theodore Draper, The Case of Cases, The New York Review of Books, 11/20/1999; Ronald Radosh, John Earl Haynes, and Harvey Klehr, "The Times vs. History: Spy Stories," The New Republic, 11/16/1998; Joshua Micah Marshall, "Exhuming McCarthy," The American Prospect, no.43, March-April 1999; New York Times Editorial Board, "Revisionist McCarthyism," New York Times, 10/23/1998, p.A31.

to their commitments and actions. They denounced the evil of Hitler with admirable prescience. Ironically, though, they sought his counter-weight in another tyrant, Joseph Stalin. Their good intentions and the circumstances in which they sought to fulfill them brought Martha, Alfred, and Bill into conflict with the federal authorities. Bill died several years after his confrontation with the government, his goals unmet, his dreams destroyed. In 1957, in order to elude the government's reach, Martha and Alfred fled into exile where their lives ended under the regimes in which they had seen the promise of the future. Under communist rule, the Sterns experienced a loss of their faith, sickness, and alienation from friends and the country they eventually longed to return to, the United States. Martha's end was especially tragic as her talent for writing died in the Communist world, and she was unable to fulfill her life's dream, writing a substantive but fictionalized portrait of her formative years, her experiences in Germany. The god in whom they placed their faith failed. This failure consumed their passions and extinguished their hopes.

The Structure of this Work

Chapters 1 and 2 begin this examination by looking at the intellectual and political development of Martha and Alfred Stern and, more briefly, Bill Dodd. Chapter 1 introduces Martha and her family and the Jeffersonian faith and resentment they shared. Chapter 2 examines the influence of Germany on Martha's inchoate liberalism. Her leftward political tendencies were fanned into a red flame by the contradictory influences of her experience of fascism, the influence of her friends, and her embrace of a utopian vision of Stalinist Russia. Mildred and Arvid Harnack (leaders of an underground resistance/espionage ring in Nazi Germany) and Martha's Soviet lover, Boris

Winogradow influenced the firming of Martha's convictions and introduced her to the world of clandestine operations. Nazi Germany annealed the alloy of her intertwined commitments towards the revolutionary ends of Stalinist Russia and anti-fascism. She fulfilled the demands of these entwined commitments through political action and participation in Soviet intelligence operations. Truly, as the introduction to an East German edition of her memoir Through Embassy Eyes stated, Martha Dodd's four-year sojourn in Nazi Germany was a "political baptism by fire."⁵⁵

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the emergence of these commitments in Martha's political and intelligence work in cooperation with Alfred and Bill. The way in which Martha's writings became tools to further her utopian vision is central to these chapters. Chapter 3 begins with Martha's return to the United States and her marriage to Alfred Kaufman Stern and her writing of Through Embassy Eyes, a powerful memoir of her years under Hitler's rule. Chapter 4 describes how the Sterns began a life of political activism even as Martha continued her contacts with Soviet intelligence. During their lives, Martha and Alfred supported numerous anti-fascist, "progressive" causes. Their acquaintances were a "Who's Who" of the American Left. The Sterns' lives, then, provide a window into the connections and commitments of well-to-do fellow travelers, including commitments to Soviet intelligence.

Chapter 5 shows how the activities of Alfred, Martha, and Bill brought each to the attention of the FBI, as their activities crossed from legitimate political speech to subversion and espionage. At the time of the government's first interest in the Sterns, though, it took only passing notice of their activity. The war with Germany, Japan, and

⁵⁵ Folder on Through Embassy Eyes, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

their allies was proceeding in full force so counterintelligence operations were aimed almost completely at the Axis powers. Chapter 6 picks up the story in 1947, when suddenly, the Bureau's interest is seized by the Sterns and those connected to them. Chapter 6, then, examines the federal response to the Sterns activities. In doing so the development of American counterintelligence policy, the nature of American freedoms in relation to subversion, and the conflict between these freedoms and the need to be secure against foreign threats are examined *inter alia*. Chapter 7 takes up the decision to prosecute the Sterns, their life in Mexico while the FBI and DOJ debate these points, and the legal issues that arose from the case when it changed from a counterintelligence investigation into a criminal prosecution. This chapter ends by showing how the Sterns, learning of their indictment, fled from Mexico to the East Bloc during the summer of 1957.

Chapter 8 concludes the story by examining the aftermath of the Sterns' flight out of reach of the United States government and into obscurity and disappointment behind the Iron Curtain. While the furor in the United States subsided, Martha and Alfred made a pilgrimage around the communist world, first to lands of the "old" revolutions, Russia and its Eastern Bloc. Finding that these nations did not live up to their revolutionary promise, Martha and Alfred chased "young revolutions" in Cuba and China, hoping to find the institutionalization of the utopia they sought. Discouraged at their failure to do so, they began to explore having the charges against them in the United States dropped so that they could return home. When their struggle to overturn the indictment succeeded in 1978, other issues prevented their return home. The Sterns' vision of a progressive future based on the Soviet model went unfulfilled in their last years; in practice the promised

utopia yielded a dystopia. They were alone, in a country whose language they did not know, with few friends, ill and aging, without the freedom they would have had in the United States. Their pilgrimage was a tragic one.

Chapter 1

Martha Dodd, 1906 to 1934

As "a thoughtful," "gay" journey across the Atlantic in June 1933 gave way to a dull trip to Hamburg, Martha Dodd greeted Nazi Germany with an "excited" heart, "taking the future ...with the uncapturable nonchalance of youth, ready for anything and nothing." Martha accompanied her father, Professor William E. Dodd, as he took up his posting as U.S. Ambassador to Hitler's court. Her mother and older brother Bill also joined them. Martha's parents, not surprisingly, had more trepidation about their journey than did their children. Nazi Germany proved to be the crucible in which their characters and commitments were refined and tempered.

Martha Eccles Dodd, the younger of the two children of Martha Johns Dodd and William E. Dodd, was born on October 8, 1908;¹ her brother William E. Dodd, Jr., three years earlier.² Her father, a noted historian of the American South, taught at the University of Chicago. Her mother came from colonial New England roots and married below her social standing when she accepted the proposal of this farmer turned academic. Although Martha's family was not wealthy, they were respectably upper-middle class. Her father's reputation as a professional historian and Democratic partisan meant that the family's status was higher than his financial means might otherwise have suggested.

¹ Whenever Martha's mother is referred to by name, Martha Johns is used. Any other reference to Martha is to Martha Dodd Stern.

Even so, Martha Johns pressed her husband to make up for his lack of standing by encouraging him to achieve higher status in his professional life. William Dodd did but remained somewhat ambivalent about the results. According to Martha, her parents indulged her a great deal.

Martha spent most of the years from childhood to adulthood living between the family farm in Round Hill, Virginia and the University of Chicago where her father taught for half of his professional career.³ Although one might suspect that life at a major university would be radically different from life on a rural Virginian farm, for Martha and her family, Round Hill and Chicago were two sides of the same coin.⁴ Her father's love of the Virginia countryside and his academic career as a leading Southern historian vividly demonstrated the Jeffersonian/agrarian values he taught.

Early Influences

William Dodd was the principal formative influence on his family and on Martha especially.⁵ A man of medium height and a slender, wiry build, he was born of Scotch-

² Bill was born August 8, 1905.

³ Round Hill is in the northwestern corner of Virginia's Loudon County, about 50 miles west of Washington, D.C.

⁴ Martha's fictionalization of her family in her second novel, The Searching Light (New York: Citadel Press, 1945) lends support to this observation.

⁵ There are two comprehensive biographies of William E. Dodd: Robert Dallek's Democrat and Diplomat: The Life of William E. Dodd (Oxford University Press; New York, 1968) and Fred Arthur Bailey's William Edward Dodd: The South's Yeoman Scholar (University Press of Virginia; Charlottesville, 1997). There is also a dissertation on his academic career by Lowery Ware, "The Academic Career of William E. Dodd," (Unpublished dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1956). Books by Dodd family members also present aspects of Dodd's life. These include Martha Dodd, Through

English, immigrant stock and raised under a strong Baptist rule. His constitution was weak as he suffered bouts of illness and depression, but he approached his commitments with fervor and strength. His personality, according to Martha, was “modest and unassuming, severe and awkwardly tender at the same time.” According to Martha, her father struggled to “overcome his southern bias” but was “not quite able” to do so; by this she apparently meant her father’s racism and anti-Semitism.⁶ William Dodd had strong likes and dislikes and was unstinting in his candor, “optimistic, intellectually vivacious, occasionally cantankerous and idealistic.”⁷

His personality was, at times, more than a bit cantankerous. Dodd disdained the manners and mannerisms of the diplomat and tended to present himself as he was, a self-made man. Still, Dodd was not a stereotypical “ugly-American;” rather, he was a “straight shooter” who found himself in a world known for its lack of candor, elitism, and calculated blandness. His rough exterior disguised a shrewd and sharp intelligence that he surgically exercised in public discourse.⁸ Dodd appeared simple, but possessed “an almost peasant shrewdness.” His unassuming way of making harsh point made his wit and his tongue weapons whose sting was often lost on the object of the barbs. He used

Embassy Eyes (New York: Garden City, 1940) and William E. Dodd, edited by Martha Dodd and William Dodd, Jr., Ambassador Dodd's Diary, (Harcourt, Brace and Company: New York, 1941), deal in depth with William Dodd. Lastly, Martha's unpublished manuscript, “Profile of My Father,” Martha Dodd Papers, Library of Congress [LOC] is also valuable.

⁶ Dodd, “Profile of My Father,” Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. Martha cites no evidence of Dodd's struggle. The extent correspondence and other sources suggest that Dodd did not concern himself much with correcting his prejudice.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

this to good effect in Nazi Germany where his lectures on the evils of Caesar and Napoleon carried implicit criticism of his host country; his lectures on Jefferson, Wilson and American History suggested corrective lessons with equal strength. Dodd was a tireless proselytizer for his democratic faith and Wilsonian progressivism.⁹

His southern, agrarian roots were central to his teaching and to his self-perception as was his estimation of Jefferson, as he understood him, and Jefferson's ideal of the "gentleman farmer." An "early religious bent" of the "Roger Williams tradition," i.e. "the absolute separation of the church and state," further leavened Dodd's character. He believed that he shared both the philosophy and the vision of Thomas Jefferson and did much to cultivate such an image.¹⁰ Dodd, though, did not seek to emulate Jefferson's political achievement so much as to play a behind the scenes role in identifying, supporting, and advising a new Jefferson. To this end, he became a political operative in the Democratic Party and advised many Democrats over the course of his career.

Conventional characterizations of Dodd, including his daughter's, rarely go beyond calling him a Jeffersonian democrat. This neglects a crucial feature of Dodd's character, resentment towards social distinctions, especially those derived from wealth. Fred Arthur Bailey has argued that: "from his youthful experiences [Dodd] developed a **bitterness** toward the aristocracy of his native soil, and from his adult observations he fashioned a **resentment toward all privileged classes** – Southern patricians, Northern industrialists, Prussian Junkers, German Nazis."¹¹ Dodd's resentment profoundly

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Bailey, William Edward Dodd: The South's Yeoman Scholar, p.87

¹¹ Ibid., p.87.

influenced his family. Martha and Bill embraced it, and, as they concluded that American democracy had failed, followed this resentment from their father's progressive liberalism into a faith in Soviet Communism.

Martha's mother had less of a formative influence on Martha's character and commitments. Martha Johns, a petite woman of fragile health, was strong-willed and unshakably loyal to her family. Although she desired high social status, she too disdained the social pretensions of the diplomatic establishment in Germany (and the capitalists she knew). According to Martha, her mother was ahead of her time. Neither Martha Johns's background nor her desire for status precluded her having a number of radical ideas. Martha remembered fondly how her mother dreamed of a day when children would be born outside of the womb. It was Martha Johns's vision of her daughter's future as a successful working woman, wife, and mother that most influenced Martha.¹²

The last member of Martha's family was Bill. Although the siblings shared similar hopes and passions, Bill was a persistent concern to his sister and their parents. William Dodd treated Bill as a child well into Bill's adult years. In May of 1933, a month before Roosevelt asked him to go to Germany, William Dodd decided to check up on his son who was living in Washington. He wrote that "William is the victim of a group at the Institute and some hangers-on in Washington – one or two 'fresh women'." The elder Dodd reprimanded his adult son and wrote to his wife "that I cannot leave the house and gates open to everyone. Shall bring all keys with me. These people will simply overbear

¹² Letter, Martha Dodd Stern to Max Delbruck, 3/24/1978, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

[Bill] no matter what I say.” Bill was twenty-seven years old at the time but, in his father's eyes, still a troubled teen.¹³

For many years, Bill prepared to be a professional historian like his father. He completed the necessary credentials and began an academic career. He received an AB from the University of Chicago (1928), an MA from Harvard (1932) and a doctorate at the University of Berlin (1934), all in history. Between 1929 and 1935 he taught at University of North Carolina, American University, Rutgers University, and William and Mary College. Like his father, Dodd studied the Ante-Bellum South and concentrated on the colonial period. His dissertation analyzed the Blairs, a colonial aristocratic, Virginian family.

Despite these efforts, Bill never secured a permanent position in academia. After his failure at William and Mary, he gave up his effort to become an academic. He idolized his father and tried to follow in Dodd's footsteps. Bill's efforts to enter academia came not from strong desire to be an historian so much as from a desire not to disappoint his father. Based on a reading of the correspondence between William Dodd and his family, it appears that Bill's plans from the 1920's through the mid-1930's were as much his as they were his father's. Bill, though, could not fill William Dodd's shoes.

Martha's memories of her brother were tinged with a mix of love and pity. In correspondence with her parents in the 1930's, Martha appears not as a younger sibling but as a concerned older sister. Her ambivalence towards Bill is suggested further in writings like her short story "Brother and Sister." Martha modeled the relationship of the

¹³ Letter, William E. Dodd to Martha Johns Dodd, 5/13/1933, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

twin characters in the story on her relationship with Bill. The story details how the sister of the pair sabotages a new romance of her brother. Her motivations mix concern that her brother's love interest should be worthy of him with an almost incestuous desire for his attention.

Additional evidence of Martha's ambivalence appears in her writings. Bill rarely appears in Martha's German memoir, Through Embassy Eyes. This absence, in part, is understandable because Bill left Germany after he earned his doctorate in 1934 to teach in the United States. It is also understandable given his work with the anti-nazi, Communist front, the *Rassemblement Universelle pour la Paix*¹⁴ after he left the U.S. Still, much of the action in the memoir takes place before Bill's return to the United States and it is odd that he does not play a more important role. For a person Martha considered so important in her life, she wrote very little about him in her memoir.

This is especially perplexing in light of the importance of the role Martha says Bill played in her life. Writing of Bill in her memoir, Martha said she was glad that her "devoted friend, confidant and brother" would accompany her to Germany. She reported that his "critical intelligence and his opportunities to see many places [she] was unable to see" proved to be sources of valuable insight for her. Bill helped her to understand "the whole scene,"¹⁵ and so, she credited him as a major factor in enabling her to see the evil of the Nazi regime. This was the first and the last time that Martha acknowledged Bill's influence in her memoir.

¹⁴ The Universal Rally [or Campaign] for Peace, Peace Campaign for short. See Chapter 2, pp.87 and ff. for more detail.

¹⁵ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, pp.13 to 15.

The clearest example of Martha's ambivalence, though, appears in her 1954 novel, The Searching Light,¹⁶ a fictionalization of the California Loyalty Oath controversy. In the novel, no major character represents Bill. The protagonist, John Minot, is clearly a mask for her father. Minot's wife is Martha's mother complete with heart ailment that keeps her bed-ridden. And his daughter, an aspiring artist, is Martha. Bill Dodd does not appear as a member of the fictionalized Dodd family. Instead he appears in a supporting role as the male of a pair of intelligent, proletariat, socially aware twins; a second version of Martha is the other twin. These characters play a small, but critical role at a crucial moment in the plot, but are not a major part of the story.

Martha's fictional siblings in Searching Light and "Brother and Sister" share a special bond, almost knowing each other's thoughts, speaking a private language, sharing the same dreams, passions, and ideology. Her fictional siblings do not learn from each other but, rather, share all that they are. The male sibling in her stories is not an elder brother, but the same age, an identical twin. Furthermore, the relationship is more than fraternal. The female of the set competes for her brother's attention with his love interest, not quite realizing she is doing so, but keeping her brother from separating from her nonetheless. In Martha's vision, Bill is not her older brother and teacher. The relationship between Bill and Martha appears as close as possible, but the oddity of the relationship raises questions that are not answerable with the available evidence.

Although Bill's role in Martha's life was ambiguous, two of her father's colleagues made a major impact on her life. The first of these was Carl Sandburg. Martha had known Sandburg since she was a teenager. The noted writer had been a friend of her

¹⁶ Martha Dodd, The Searching Light (New York: Citadel Press, 1954).

parents for even longer. It was at the age of twenty-three, according to Martha, that she “began to feel the genius and uniqueness of his personality.” She credited Sandburg with trying to release her creative energy and to “broaden and deepen [her] almost negligible social consciousness.” Sandburg told her to “see life, to open [herself] to all new adventures of the mind and spirit.”¹⁷ Martha claimed she “fought against his ideas, reviled radicals and their ilk, and resented the emphasis he put upon the simple man,” but that this began to change even before she went to Germany.¹⁸

At that time, though, the influence of the communist left was growing and would reach the apex of its growth by the mid-1930s. The Great Depression provided fertile ground for the explosion of radicalisms of all sorts, and in many cases, demagogues to expound these radical, usually agrarian, views. The intellectuals, artists, writers, and some scientists, also found a radicalism to embrace in answer to the Depression - Stalinism. Martha's comments noted above hint that she was coming under the influence of this kind of radicalism. Given her vocation as a writer, this was not surprising, as this group was strongly drawn to the left.¹⁹

Radical Influences

Robert Morss Lovett was the key to this change taking hold. Lovett, a professor of English Literature and Composition at the University of Chicago, was an early fellow

¹⁷ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, p.8.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.8. The William Dodd Papers contain locks of Sandburg's hair as a family memento.

¹⁹ On the rise of radicalism during the Great Depression see Harvey Klehr, The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade. More generally see Robert S. McElvaine, The Great Depression, (New York: Times Books, 1984).

traveler of the Communist Party.²⁰ He taught Martha at the University High School and later as an undergraduate, off and on, between 1928 and 1931 at the University of Chicago. During many long nights between the spring of 1932 to the spring of 1933, Lovett opened her mind and directed her eyes towards "war and working conditions," "inequality and injustice," "economic persecution," and the "impossibility for anyone to live or work in isolation from these things." He would gently refute her argument: "what does it matter to writers or artists, how and why does this concern me when I am reviewing books and writing love stories."²¹ According to Martha, Lovett's keen mind and strong emotions planted many seeds in her that grew into fruition in Germany.

In Through Embassy Eyes, Martha denied having class-consciousness before traveling to Germany. She suggested that she was unaware of "political and economic issues, large social problems" throughout her years of college, first years of work, and for a time, in Germany. Although she took courses in philosophy, economics and science, she forgot them immediately. Concentrating on literature and criticism, Martha retreated to "a little clique of so-called intellectuals" where they crafted "elaborate arguments and discussions of literary ideas and techniques, of poetry and painting."²²

²⁰ David Cate, The Fellow Travellers: A Postscript to the Enlightenment, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973), p.24.

²¹ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, pp.6 to 7.

²² Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, pp.4 to 5. "so-called" allows Martha to suggest that her connection to these "intellectuals" was fleeting and a matter of the past. Martha, though, prided herself on just this kind of contact and she maintained close contact with Lovett until she left for Germany. Furthermore, her job as a book reviewer for the Chicago Tribune suggests she continued to do similar things to what she described on pp.4-5. In Germany, her friends Mildred and Arvid Harnack provided the same kind of contact.

If this group influenced Martha its effect was ephemeral; Lovett's influence was unmistakable. Martha wrote: "As a socially functioning human being, I was to learn his significance and courage later, in the climate of Nazi Germany where the seeds he planted were to grow."²³ Even as she half-heartedly rejected his teaching and the complimentary one of Sandburg, she came to accept all that they taught her. Had Martha directly said at the beginning of Through Embassy Eyes that: "I was leaning towards Communism before I left the United States and I became a Communist in Germany" the rhetorical force of her work would have been destroyed. Instead, she uses her shift from fascism to antifascism to build a narrative tension between the radical message Sandburg and Lovett imparted to her and her eventual acceptance of it. Thus, in her memoir, Nazi Germany emerges as the crucible in which Martha learned the "truth" of the ideas and sentiments to which her teachers had exposed her. This tension, as will be shown below, was real, but much less pronounced than Martha suggests.

Lovett, Sandburg, and her father, then, were the central figures in the development of Martha's mature thought. These writers were not the only influences on Martha's her earlier reading and studies proved influential too.²⁴ As a teenager, Martha "devotedly and passionately" read the major Russian authors who sparked in Martha a burning ambition to be a writer and a poet. At the same time, she also came under the influence of Nietzsche via the H. L. Mencken edition of The Anti-Christ. Nietzsche, she noted, encouraged in her a "critical" sense.²⁵ This combination of romanticism, nihilism,

²³ Ibid., p.6.

²⁴ Ibid., pp.5-6.

²⁵ Ibid., p.4. Martha corresponded with Mencken over several years following her reading of his version of Nietzsche's The Anti-Christ.

and desire for the artistic life, meant that Martha's aspirations and world-view were typical of those described as "the lost generation."²⁶ These influences blended with the progressivism and social resentment felt by her father (and Martha and Bill) and emerged in Martha's mature ideological outlook as she sought to become a noted writer.

Romantic Inclinations

William Dodd thought his daughter was well on her way to fulfilling her dream of being a writer. In 1931, he wrote to congratulate Martha on "[her] far better realization of [her] personal resources and aptitudes that [he] was able to obtain at the same time of life."²⁷ In spite of this confidence, Martha's parents often worried that she would cast off her dreams and marry one of her many beaux. Although they hoped Martha would pursue her education, develop her writing talent, and make a mark in the world before getting married, they worried that Martha might eschew her hopes and dreams for the momentary pleasures of romantic love. They had good reason to fear this.

In high school in the mid-1920's, Martha's fascination with poetry and romantic literature paralleled her social life. Martha and her friend "Tikie" would lie across one or the other's bed, eat olives, and talk about Martha's latest infatuation.²⁸ William Dodd was worried. He wrote Martha that he was happy when she was making "progress – except in one direction, which I hate to think of your taking, inevitable as it is that you

²⁶ This group was in many ways like the Bloomsbury group in England. [see Stephen Koch, Double Lives: Spies and Writers in the Soviet War of Ideas Against the West (New York: The Free Press, 1994)].

²⁷ Letter, William Dodd to Martha Dodd, 1931, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC.

²⁸ "Tickie" was Letitia Ratner; Ratner is her maiden name.

will take it." The direction implied was marriage.²⁹ The story had not changed two years later. In July 1927, Professor Dodd wrote Bill: "if [Martha] really wants to settle down and marry I shall not put anything in the way, as I have never done, though I have opinions and I have seen some sorrowful shipwrecks."³⁰ Dodd was unwilling to state clearly this disapprobation to his then 19-year-old daughter and so warn her away from the dangers he saw clearly; even if he had a less head-strong daughter, his advice would likely have gone unheeded.

Throughout this period, a number of young men courted Martha, an attractive, vivacious, and intelligent young woman. During a 1928 trip to Europe where Martha spent time studying at the Sorbonne, her romantic aspirations drew her to the tombs of Abelard and Heloise. These romantic airs also drew her to living paramours as a "Jean Christoff" and an unnamed "Baron," each sought her favor. Back in Chicago, students regularly pressed Professor Dodd for updates on "the family." Louis Gottschalk, a graduate student of Dodd's, was one of these. He wrote Martha a number of mawkish love letters while she was away.³¹

By the early 1930's, Martha had accepted several marriage proposals but had not made it to the altar. The March 25, 1930 *Chicago Tribune* announced that in June Martha was to marry Royal Henderson, a graduate of Ohio State University. The engagement ended quickly, the circumstances unclear. Soon afterwards, though, Martha

²⁹ Letter, William E. Dodd to Martha Dodd, 12/14/1925, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

³⁰ Letter, William E. Dodd to William Dodd Jr., 7/29/1927, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

³¹ Letters, Undated [ca.1928], Louis Gottschalk to Martha Dodd, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

began receiving letters declaring the romantic affection of author Leslie River. River opined "Dearest Motsie ...I know I love you completely, body and soul, and need you."³² Martha adored the devotion and romanticism that her multiple suitors offered her, but she was unwilling to commit to any of these early paramours.

The most serious of Martha's youthful flirtations was George Bassett Roberts, a tall, dark-haired, New York banker, ten-years her senior. Bassett, as she called him, had gone to University High before World War I and then to the Columbia School of Journalism. During World War I, he served in the Coast Guard. Upon returning, he became editor of the Monthly Review of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Martha remembered falling in love with Bassett at first sight when she met him at a party in Chicago in 1930.

In 1931, Bassett took over his father's bank in New York. William Dodd referred to Roberts as the "wolf of Wall Street" and was not entirely happy about the seriousness of Martha's and Bassett's relationship. Bassett, at least, was more well rounded than his Dodd's mildly critical nickname for him. Bassett and Martha shared a passion for the arts and reading. They enjoyed attending plays and musical performances together. While dating, Bassett would read to her "from Abbot's "The Great Painters" of the early Italian masters – Masaccio, Cimabue, Giotto." She thought that Bassett was "always wonderful about showering [her] with flowers and gifts, perhaps too much so?"³³

Within weeks of their first meeting, Martha longed to marry Bassett, but he was not ready. Bassett, though, was too "hard to land" for Martha. The relationship did not

³² Letter, River Les[lie] to MD, ca.1930/31, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

progress as rapidly as Martha desired and, as her resentment built up, they fought frequently. After a year and a half of fighting and making-up, Bassett proposed. In March 1932, they eloped in New York City; it does not appear that Martha's parents realized this at the time. The marriage had problems from the morning of the honeymoon. Bassett neglected to send Martha flowers as he left her in their honeymoon bed and went to work. Matters degenerated from there. In April, Bassett sailed to Europe for an extended business trip to Geneva and Germany.

Martha returned to Chicago and in anger and pain, turned to other lovers. She "flirted" with Carl Sandburg as she later reminisced to Basset.³⁴ A more serious romance developed at the same time.³⁵ Martha also began "flirting" with James Burnham, a noted, young socialist and political scientist. While Bassett was in Europe, Martha and Burnham prepared to marry. It is not clear when (or if) he found out she was already married, but, as Burnham diplomatically wrote his friend, Sidney Schiff, "...the imminent prospect of marriage ...convinced us both that marriage itself would be unwise." The engagement was broken and Burnham was left to put the best face on matters.³⁶

³³ Letter, Martha Dodd to George Bassett Roberts, 11/1/1971, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Katrina Vanden Heuvel notes that the relationship was sexual in "Grand Illusions," Vanity Fair, 9/1991, p.225.

³⁶ For the Roberts correspondence, see the Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. A copy of the Burnham letter to Schiff, 5/14/1932, was provided to Dr. Douglas Wheeler by Sidney Schiff [Letter, James Burnham to Sidney Schiff, 5/14/1932; Letter, Sidney Schiff to Dr. Douglas Wheeler].

In later correspondence with Bassett, Martha said that after he left for Europe she “was busy healing [her] wounds and hurting [him] with Sandburg and others” because of her bitterness over his tardy proposal and their problematic marriage.³⁷ If she did so, it is not clear that she was simply using Burnham. In her own way she was apparently in love with Burnham even as she still loved Bassett. Her parents found the match with Burnham more favorable than that with Bassett. William Dodd had disapproved of the age difference between Martha and Bassett and thought they did not share enough interests. Burnham's academic and liberal credentials would have served him well in the Dodd's estimation where Bassett's role in the capitalist world did not. Burnham later earned Martha's enmity because he became a staunch anti-Communism. Bassett, despite his capitalist bent, remained in friendly contact with Martha throughout his life. Burnham's apostasy was unforgivable apparently.

As Martha and Burnham broke their engagement, Bassett returned from his extended business trip. He immediately dealt with the confusion that he had left behind two months earlier. He patched matters up with Martha and then sought to assuage her father's concern. Bassett wrote William Dodd of his hope that Martha would join him in New York and his wish that she could be happy there. Although Dodd did not mind Bassett, he did not like the state of his daughter's affairs.³⁸ Dodd, as in the past, made no fuss about his daughter's choice; perhaps, he should have.

Although matters improved slightly upon Bassett's return, Martha found herself unable to stay with him. The two separated and she moved back with the family in

³⁷ Letter, Martha Dodd to Bassett, 11/1/1971, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

Chicago. During the summer of 1932, Martha's parents made a few feeble efforts to straighten out their daughter's affairs. In one letter, Martha Johns said she was glad that her daughter and Jim [Burnham] "had not fought," but that she could not "be sure from your letters – between the lines – that yours and [Burnham's] is a platonic friendship. There seems to be too much in common, companionship, emotionalism and intellectual interests, etc. ...I like both men as you do. Marrying is another matter." Martha's mother then informed her of the University of Chicago's philosophy class offerings for the upcoming semester, suggesting subtly how she thought Martha should direct her thoughts.³⁹ William Dodd said even less as he kept to the policy of "not put anything in the way" of his daughter's desires as he told Bill in an letter quoted above.

By the next year, she had moved to Germany with her family. In spite of this distance, Bassett tried one last time to save their marriage. In 1934, he traveled to Berlin to see Martha and win her back. His "mission to Berlin," as Martha called it, failed. She later told him that their marriage didn't work because she "was too immature and young, even at 23 [sic.], to want to leave my family! My heart broke when my father said to me, while fussing with something on our front lawn, shortly after you married me, 'So my dear little girl wants to leave her old father!'"⁴⁰ Bassett returned to the United States and instituted divorce proceedings in Reno, Nevada on the grounds of abandonment. It was

³⁸ Letter, Martha Dodd to George Bassett Roberts, 11/1/1971, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

³⁹ Letter, Martha Johns Dodd to Martha Dodd, 10/8/1932, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴⁰ Letter, Martha Dodd to George Bassett Roberts, 2/19/1976, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. See also other letters in the file of Roberts' correspondence.

granted in June 1934 and briefly noted in the Chicago papers. Her parents, apparently, had not been "too upset about the marriage:"

What they were upset about was the divorce, as they did not believe in divorce and they thought we should have waited for years before doing it! And the indecorous charge of "desertion" shocked them. It should have been incompatibility or something like that they thought and in view of the whole history of our love I think they were right.

As she separated from Bassett during the summer of 1932, this closure was two years in the future.

Martha Johns's suggestion in the letter regarding Burnham quoted above that her daughter finish her philosophy requirement was rejected. Martha gave up her undergraduate education and sought a job.⁴¹ The Chicago Tribune hired her as an Assistant Literary Editor, thus giving her an outlet for both her interests in literature and her aspirations to be a writer. Between 1932 and 1933, Martha reviewed novels for the Tribune. One book she clearly remembered reviewing was Ella Winter's Red Virtue, a glowing portrayal of the nascent Communist regime in the Soviet Union.⁴² Martha commented favorably on the book and told her father of the vivid impression it had made on her. "Papa," Martha wrote, "listened sympathetically to my description of the book and then said quietly:"

There may be good points in the system you mention, apparently the author thinks so; but I can't believe that any form of government which oppresses the freedom and initiative of the individual can be anything but dangerous to the human soul in the long run.

⁴¹ Martha had been working towards a degree since 1928 at the University of Chicago including time in a Washington, D.C. finishing school and a year in France.

⁴² Ella Winter, Red Virtue: Human Relationships in the New Russia (Harcourt, Brace and Company; NY, 1933). Winter was the wife of Lincoln Steffens, and later, Donald Ogden Stewart, one of the Hollywood Ten and an acquaintance of Martha's.

Commenting to the reader, Martha noted that "[she] was to see and learn later" whether her father was correct.⁴³ Because Winter's book came out in the early months of 1933, Martha's anecdote must have taken place only months before she joined her father in Germany.

Martha's political development was becoming apparent in other ways as well. At the Tribune's office, Martha expressed sympathy for striking protesters marching outside of her window. One of her colleagues criticized her. That night while dining with her family at the University of Chicago faculty club, she told of seeing the protesters and of their abuse by the police. Someone at the table called her a "Bolshevik." At the time, Martha wrote, she was unable to make a connection between the attitude she expressed and Bolshevism, but greatly resented the comment as she "was merely sympathetic with people who expressed their ideas boldly."⁴⁴ Clearly, her social relationships, her romantic aspirations, her education and her family background were all leading her towards the left of the political spectrum.

A Jeffersonian in Hitler's Court

On March 4 of 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was sworn in as President. Supporters flocked to Washington for the regular rite that follows the investiture of a new administration. Each petitioned for a position in the new government. William E. Dodd was one of many supplicants, though much better connected than most. That March, Dodd met with old political allies like Cordell Hull and Daniel Roper, Roosevelt's new

⁴³ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, pp.7-8.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.7.

Secretaries of State and Commerce respectively, to discuss the possibility of a position in the new administration.⁴⁵ Dodd proposed that he be appointed "Ambassador at Large" or "Ambassador without Portfolio" so that he could press Wilsonian internationalism and Jeffersonian democracy in a public forum.⁴⁶ Roper and Hull countered, suggesting posts in "Belgium or Holland, or some Latin American country." Dodd said that he "could not afford to take a position that would defeat [his] work" and so declined such consideration.⁴⁷

Dodd may have been well connected to the new administration but he was not as influential as many in Chicago thought. Friends and acquaintances sought his aid in making connections with the administration even as Dodd sought a position for himself. One who did so was unwelcome to the Dodd family. Martha Johns warned Bill to deflect the importuning of Mrs. Nitze, a family acquaintance. Nitze wanted Dodd to write a letter of introduction to Frances Perkins, the new Secretary of Labor for her son, who wanted to obtain a government contract for his paper company. Mrs. Dodd knew that her husband would not want to do this and so told Bill to put off Nitze's request; none of the Dodds, as noted, were particularly fond of capitalists.

⁴⁵ Daniel Roper was an old lieutenant of Woodrow Wilson's and had been a friend of William Dodd's for many years [James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and The Fox (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1956), p.149].

⁴⁶ Dallek, Democrat and Diplomat, covers the selection of Dodd as ambassador to Germany quite well. Martha, though, found much to be desired in his account. In a May 12, 1968, Letter to Arnold Offner, Martha wrote "As I recall your slant on my father's career in Germany was much more progressive and politically aware than Dallek's." Offner wrote American Appeasement: American Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933-38. The letter is in the Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴⁷ Letter, William E. Dodd to Martha Johns Dodd, 3/15/1933, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

Despite facing initial trouble finding a position in Roosevelt's administration, Dodd did not give up. Instead, while he continued to search, he handled a number of other matters in Washington, D.C. He lobbied the chairman of the House Agriculture Committee on a matter of concern. The Superintendent of the Census asked Dodd to find him an assistant and his friends Roper and Colonel House pressed Hull to propose Dodd for the Ambassadorship of Germany. Hull, though, appeared uninterested in making the suggestion to Roosevelt. By the end of the month, Dodd wrote home about his failure. Good-naturedly he asked Martha to "tell mother not to weep if her husband's name does not run in the headlines – that is not his gift, if he has any."⁴⁸

Dodd did not give up. He continued his research, writing, and farm management at Round Hill while he maintained his contacts in the Roosevelt Administration. In May, Roper suggested a position with the Division of Foreign Commerce. The position did not appeal to Dodd and the two discussed the possibility of an ambassadorship to Bermuda. Having failed to find a position to his liking, Dodd returned to Chicago in the late spring to prepare for the fall semester at Chicago.

On June 8, while talking with Robert Morss Lovett in his office at Chicago, Dodd's telephone rang.⁴⁹ "This is Franklin Roosevelt," the voice on the line said, "I want you to go Germany as Ambassador." Dodd was understandably surprised, "though not so

⁴⁸ Letter, Martha Johns Dodd to William Dodd, Jr., 4/19/1933, Martha Dodd Papers; Letter, William E. Dodd to Martha Dodd, 4/27/1933, William E. Dodd Papers. The correspondence between Martha and her father at this time is full of political minutiae. He had been doing this for quite some time. Contrary to Martha's claim in *Through Embassy Eyes* that she was "apolitical" prior to sailing to Germany there is no indication in her correspondence to him to suggest that she had no interest in political matters.

⁴⁹ Dodd, Ambassador Dodd's Diary (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1941), p.3.

surprised [he] dropped the receiver or anything like that.” He “recognized the President’s voice, which helped the situation a good deal.”⁵⁰ Dodd asked the President for time to consider his decision; Roosevelt obliged him with two hours for reflection. After calling his wife at home, Dodd cleared an extended leave with Robert Maynard Hutchins, President of the University. He then called Washington and accepted. Later Martha Johns contacted Martha and Bill to tell them the news.

Several of Dodd’s strengths commended him to Roosevelt’s attention. His political connections opened the door. The reputation of his teaching and his scholarship suggested that Dodd’s appointment would make the statement Roosevelt intended to send to Hitler’s Court, i.e. the beneficence of the American democratic tradition. The fact that Dodd had received his doctorate from the University of Leipzig and knew firsthand the language and culture of Germany also recommended him to Roosevelt.

Some of these same features made Dodd an odd choice for ambassador. His love of liberty and democratic government combined with his background as a strong defender of these ideals was sure to needle Hitler’s Court. Dodd’s academic background ill-prepared him for the intricacies of diplomatic relations. Further, the shallowness of his political connections back-home left him without strong support in the Roosevelt Administration; when he came under attack, few defended him. These traits, although not major problems at first, made his ambassadorship a trying ordeal for Dodd and the civil servants working under him.

⁵⁰ Chicago Herald-Examiner, 6/12/1933; quoted in Philip Metcalfe, 1933 (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1988), p.10. Ambassador Dodd’s Diary describes a similar incident although some of the dialogue is different [p.3].

Dodd's understandable animus towards Nazism and his distaste for social elites led him into a crusade against fascism that he pursued from his first days in Germany until his death in 1940. Was his stand admirable? Yes. Was it diplomatic? No. Dodd performed well at times in a difficult situation and was often prescient regarding the evil of Nazism. His cultivation of the press in Germany, aided no doubt by the close friendships Martha and Bill developed with the press, was unique at that time for an Ambassador. His approach paralleled the similar use of the media by President Roosevelt. Doubts regarding even these aspects of Dodd's service, though, must be raised primarily because the favorable portrayals of this performance rest on the record of Ambassador Dodd's Diary. This work and its creation are examined in detail in Chapter 2.

Little debate emerged at the time of Roosevelt's appointment. Over the years criticism of Dodd grew. Dodd pleased some with his service - especially his fellow, Wilsonian old guard; many, though, disparaged his ambassadorship. He especially irked the foreign policy establishment, the State Department bureaucrats, the diplomatic corps, and those who took a "realist" approach to foreign policy. His idealism and pessimism earned him the nickname of "Professor Cassandra," from supporters like Claude Bowers but derision from critics. Following Dodd's death, Westbrook Pegler claimed that Roosevelt confused the historian with another Dodd, a professor from Princeton.⁵¹

⁵¹ Westbrook Pegler, "As Pegler Sees It: FDR Sent Stupid Envoy to Germany in 1933," New York Journal American, 9/25/1947. Martha issued her letters to the editor and Eleanor Roosevelt on 11/2/1947 and the former first lady issued an apology in her column in The New York World Telegram of 11/18/1947.

These debates, though, were five-years or more in the future from when Dodd agreed to go to Germany. When he embarked that July 1933, he did not face the Nazis alone. Martha Johns, not surprisingly, accompanied him. Bill, too, readily accepted the chance to join his father. He planned to pursue a doctorate at a German university as his father had thirty-two years before. Martha, unlike the rest of her family, took a while to decide to go to Germany. She was loath to give up her job at the Tribune, but the prospect of an adventure in Germany appealed to Martha in several respects. It allowed her to continue to live with her family and to run farther away from the consequences of her failed marriage.

The promise of life in a foreign land also fueled Martha's romantic spirit. Martha decided that her job was insufficient to keep her in the United States and she agreed to join the family in Germany for a year. The call of "adventure" won out. In choosing to accompany her family to Berlin, Martha "had to choose between [my father] and "adventure", and [Bassett]. I couldn't help making the choice that I did." Germany "was new adventure breaking in [Martha's] middle youth, not sought after, not fully appreciated."⁵²

The Dodd family boarded the S.S. *Washington* for Europe on July 5, 1933, less than a month after Dodd accepted Roosevelt's request. Dodd expected a short stay and had told his family to leave most of their things at home. Martha Johns expected that the social scene to be moribund as the Nazis had surely destroyed the court life in Germany,

⁵² Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, p.19. When Martha went to Germany with her family in June 1933, she was still married to Bassett. Their divorce was not finalized until the next summer. See below for more detail.

therefore, they packed only the clothing that they expected they would need.⁵³ Following her mother's instructions, Martha packed no dresses for social events. The family Chevrolet came also because Bill was to serve as chauffeur to his father from time to time. The rest of their possessions were packed into storage or locked in their homes in Chicago and Virginia.

On the trip over the family worked on their German. Dodd was rusty but his German quickly improved, as he had been fluent during his years of doctoral study in Leipzig. The rest of his family struggled to learn the language with Dodd's help and several books. Martha never became proficient at spoken German, although she could read and understand the language well enough to follow most conversations. She also struck up a friendship with Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. who traveled on the same ship.

The family's arrival in Hamburg on July 13, 1933 was less than auspicious. Embassy staff and representatives of the press met the Dodds as they got off the train they had caught after disembarking. Having misunderstood a telegram from the Counselor of the Embassy, they were without train tickets to Berlin, permits and licenses for the car they brought with them, or any real knowledge of what to expect. The welcome by the Embassy staff immediately showed the distance between the academic *qua* diplomat and the established U.S. personnel in Germany. The modest personal effects of the Dodds almost enraged the Embassy's counselor, a man "of the most extreme protocol," as Martha described him.⁵⁴

⁵³ Ibid., pp.14-15.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.20. The following paragraphs also rely, in general, upon the presentations of Dallek's Democrat and Diplomat and Bailey's William Edward Dodd. Both accounts flesh out Martha's story with historical context and detail that Martha does

William Dodd was not a typical appointee to an ambassadorship. He had received his position neither because of his wealth, nor because of the generosity of a political benefactor. Nor had he worked his way up through the career diplomatic service. Dodd was at odds with the Embassy personnel from the beginning because he lobbied to institute a number of reforms both in his Embassy and in the State Department as a whole. These reforms aimed to do away with the frequent and expensive rounds of entertaining expected of the Ambassador and his staff. Not being wealthy, Dodd could not have afforded this on his government salary anyway. A special allowance had to be made for him so that he could entertain at all. He also sought to reform embassy work schedules, work loads, and the quality of the reporting by his staff of pertinent information as he tried to create an efficient office. In short, Dodd sought to force "progressive"⁵⁵ reform on an entrenched aristocracy. He made more enemies than friends in so doing and thus cut himself off from the traditional sources of diplomatic intelligence and deal-making. Dodd's relationship with the press did not fully make up for his loss of diplomatic access. He missed crucial information and the chance to work with his fellow diplomats because of his approach.

The embassy staff, especially the counselor, detested the press and, at first, tried to convince Dodd to ignore them. Instead, the new ambassador cultivated relations with reporters, especially "Norman Ebbutt, Louis Lochner, Sigrid Schultz, William Shirer, and Otto Toluschus to feed him news."⁵⁶ The day after his arrival Dodd presented himself to

not provide. Even so, each heavily relies on Ambassador Dodd's Diary, a potential problem that is discussed in chapter 3.

⁵⁵ Used in the sense of the "Progressive Era."

⁵⁶ Dallek, Democrat and Diplomat, pp.288-9.

the press corps, giving a statement first to the American correspondents and then to the German ones. Over time, Dodd's relationship with the press became an essential element to his ability to keep the Roosevelt Administration informed about German events. Dodd came to be treated with nearly open, if not clearly open, disdain by the Nazi regime. Dodd received little information from his official contacts with Nazi officials and so had to rely on other means to stay informed.

On his third day in Germany, Dodd presented his credentials at the German Foreign Office. It was not until several weeks later that Hitler was able to accept them as he had been on vacation in the South of Germany at the time. He did not purposely snub the new Ambassador, as he would later. It took some time before the Nazis gauged the full measure of the man Roosevelt had sent and the strength of his antipathy towards them. That Dodd would be an annoyance who regularly irked the Nazis was not yet suspected by Hitler's minions.

Dodd's sharp sense of humor and disdain for Nazism quickly became apparent. These characteristics proved antagonistic to the Nazis. For example, at a dinner with several Germans and diplomats in 1935, Dodd discussed the assassination of Senator Huey Long. "That's the fate of an American dictator," he said, 'The blood of tyrants is the natural manure for the tree of liberty.' I feel like congratulating the assassin."⁵⁷ His company was not amused

The rest of the Dodd family detested the Nazis as much as the Ambassador did. Martha, though, suggested in her memoir that she was not an anti-fascist when she first

⁵⁷ "Profile of My Father," Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. Huey Long was assassinated on 9/8/1935.

arrived in Germany. She claimed that the Nazi's boisterous enthusiasm swept her up at first and carried her away for a significant period, perhaps for as much as a year, according to her memoir implies. "The intoxication of the new regime" made her feel like a child, "ebullient and careless,"⁵⁸ even as her family and some new acquaintances "advised her not to be impressed by the strident vitality, by the trumpets and torches, the primitive pageantry" of the Nazi regime.⁵⁹ Martha read whatever Nazi propaganda came into her hands, explained away the growing evidence of the falsity of the regime, and defended the Nazis to her family and friends. Stories against the Nazis, she would argue, had to be either overblown, false, or the result of individual error. While Martha defensively explained away Nazi excesses to her father, the Ambassador would look at her "a bit stonily if tolerantly and, both in private and in public, gently label me a young Nazi."⁶⁰

By her own account in Through Embassy Eyes, Martha implies she was not carried along by the Nazi spirit for more than a year. Actually, it was much shorter than that. In 1943, she said her flirtation with Nazism lasted no more than two and a half months.⁶¹ As seen earlier, Martha was clearly pulled to the left politically both from the influence of her father and teachers. Her actions and thoughts noted above clearly show she was sympathetic to the political left, even the Communist left as her admiration of

⁵⁸ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, p.28.

⁵⁹ Martha Dodd, "Bright Journey Into Darkness," Martha Dodd Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.36.

⁶¹ Martha Dodd, [ca. 5/1943], "Memorandum, copy" from Martha to 20th Century Fox Study, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. A description of the context of this memo and a long quote from it appear in Chapter 4.

Ella Winter's homage to the USSR suggests. Martha's claim that she went to Germany as a political naïf may be true, in one sense, but not because she was apolitical, but rather because she did not clearly understand the implications of her sympathies at that point. The similarities between the Nazi and Communist programs may have confused her too. Her experience in Nazi Germany clearly provided her with a horizon under which to organize these early thoughts and influences. The rest of this chapter details much of this change.

The Making of an Anti-fascist

Martha's education in the evils of Nazism began almost immediately. Within a week or two of the Dodd's arrival, Martha was traveling the countryside with her brother and Quentin Reynolds, the Hearst correspondent. On one excursion, Martha first experienced Nazi anti-Semitism. The three friends witnessed the public shaming of a woman who had reputedly "offered [herself] to a Jew." To avoid scandal, Martha and Bill convinced Reynolds not to submit the story. Another reporter "scooped" Reynolds and told of how the new American ambassador's children had witnessed Nazi brutality first-hand. It is likely that Reynolds leaked the story to another reporter in order to avoid directly angering the Nazis by writing it himself.

The most influential person in Martha's rejection of the momentary pull of Nazism, though, was American-born Mildred Fish Harnack. Mildred was six years older than Martha, but the relationship was more complex than that of an older sister and a younger sister. Martha remembered that she and Mildred shared "everything [they]

thought about, loved, hated, fought for." Mildred was "inextricably a part of [Martha's] life and growth."⁶²

Martha was unable to recall the details of her first meeting with Mildred but she remembered being immediately drawn to the "tall stately" American with "large, serious blue eyes" and "a faintly smiling mouth." The meeting, according to Shareen Brysac, probably occurred on August 18 when a delegation of the American Women's Club of Berlin visited the Embassy.⁶³ The two became fast friends according to extant correspondence, snippets of attempted writings on Mildred by Martha, and other sources.

Martha was purposefully silent about this relationship in Through Embassy Eyes. The reason for this was simple: Mildred was the center of Martha's connection to the anti-fascist underground in Germany and a significant influence on Martha's decision to work for Soviet intelligence. That Mildred was a Communist working in the anti-Nazi underground and a Soviet spy from 1935 until her execution in 1942 suggests that her influence on Martha is central to Martha's turn towards the Soviet Union and her willingness to operate as a Soviet spy.

Mildred Fish was born in Milwaukee to a lower-middle class family, which traced its roots back to colonial America. While attending the University of Wisconsin she met and married Arvid Harnack, a native German from an aristocratic

⁶² Box 13, File 14, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC, contains materials collected and written by Martha as preliminary to writing a longer article on her friend. Three undated draft reflections by Martha are especially useful. The quotes in this paragraph come from the one written last. Internal evidence shows that this draft was written between 1986 and 1990, the years of Alfred's and Martha's deaths respectively because Martha wrote: "I am the only one left." The other two appear to have been drafted ca. 1948.

⁶³ Shareen Blair Brysac, Resisting Hitler: Mildred Harnack and the Red Orchestra (New York: Oxford, 2000).

lineage. They shared a social democratic temperament and moved further to the left as they continued their respective studies in America in the late 1920's.

When Arvid completed his fellowship 1928, he returned to Germany; Mildred followed him after a year teaching at Gaucher College in Baltimore, Maryland. By this time, the Harnacks were fervent anti-Nazis and had turned their eyes towards the Soviet Union for the solution to the economic problems and political instability of Weimar Germany. Arvid joined the *Bund Gesittiger Berufe* - the Union of Intellectual Professions - a front group of the KPD (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschland*, or German Communist Party). Together with like-minded friends, he also formed a group to study planned economies, especially that of the USSR.⁶⁴ Soviet intelligence took an interest in Arvid when ARPLAN traveled to the USSR for a tour and marked him for possible recruitment.⁶⁵ The origin of the Harnack's involvement in "illegal," in the sense that political opposition to the Nazi Party was illegal, anti-Nazi resistance can be seen in the creation of *ARPLAN*. Their antifascist resistance was related directly to their Communism, even as their national loyalties remained German.

Soon after World War II Martha attempted to compose a reminiscence of her friend for publication. She drafted: "[Mildred] was a Communist." The word 'Communist' has a question mark penciled-in over it. Martha appears conflicted in whether she should note the Harnacks' Communism. Her reticence is understandable as she would not wish to compromise her friends in the Underground. Even after

⁶⁴ The group was named ARPLAN, an acronym for *Arbeitsgemeinschaft zum Studien der Sowjetussischen Planwirtschaft*, or Group for the Study of Soviet Economic Planning.

Mildred's execution, Martha avoided noting her friend's Communist roots; Martha did not wish to draw attention to her own relationship with Mildred, Communism, or Soviet intelligence. Martha never completed that eulogy. In her last known draft - contextual clues indicate it was written after 1985 - Martha finally identified her friend as a Communist.

Martha, as will be shown below, knew this well as she witnessed the Harnacks create a "cover" for their anti-fascist work, recruit fellow resisters, and actively work against the Nazis. Mildred and Arvid had begun this about the same time as the Dodd's arrival as they began cultivating a pro-Nazi image immediately after the Reichstag purges in June 1933. Their cover involved Arvid pursuing a career in law at Jenna, his family home, while participating in local Nazi organizations and working his way into the Economics Ministry through his family connections. Even as Arvid pursued this course, Mildred became close to Martha and her family.

The Dodds had arrived soon after the spring purges and the Harnacks' turn to illegal work, yet "Mildred and Arvid belonged to the circle of friends of the Dodds until Ambassador Dodd was recalled to Washington," according to Dr. Lenz.⁶⁶ The reason why two people who had just turned to "illegal" resistance against Hitler's government would become friends with a family who had such a high profile appears puzzling.

⁶⁵ John Costello and Oleg Tsarev, Deadly Illusions (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993), p.73.

⁶⁶ Manuscript, "In Memoriam: Arvid Harnack," by Dr. Friedrich Lenz, Box 14, File 10, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

Although the puzzle cannot be solved with the current evidence, its outline may be sketched and many of its details revealed. The first part lies in the timing of the Harnacks' involvement in espionage. The Soviets did not recruit Arvid until 1935, two years after the Dodds' arrived. Arvid and Mildred took the first moves to build a cover on their own, without professional guidance. When they began their resistance work, they had no training or support from the Soviets as they sought to hide their roles in disseminating tracts and news forbidden by the Nazis. Even after Arvid's recruitment in 1935, he displayed poor tradecraft;⁶⁷ Mildred was worse than Arvid. The Berlin Rote Kapelle, the espionage group the Harnacks developed, evidenced a distinct lack of compartmentalization throughout its life.⁶⁸ Because of this, Martha witnessed its creation and may have played a role in it while she was in Germany.

The rest of the puzzle lies in the close personal and intellectual relationship between Martha and Mildred. Although Martha's 'political education' was begun by Carl Sandburg and Robert Morss Lovett, Mildred was singularly influential in completing it. Mildred applied a kind approach, "full of social awareness" to instruct

⁶⁷ Tradecraft is a term in intelligence circles meaning the commonly accepted skills and strategies employed by intelligence agents.

⁶⁸ Compartmentalization is considered an important component to tradecraft. Tradecraft recognizes that the best way to maintain security and reduce risk of significant exposure in an espionage ring is to limit the contacts that group members have with each other; i.e., each member is compartmentalized. It is best that an agent report to only one supervisor. If one member is caught, the identities of others in the group might be protected. Many of the Soviet rings in the 1930's failed to adhere to this principle, including the Harnack and Schulze-Boysen Rings in Germany and the Silvermaster and Perlo Rings in the United States. The Soble Ring, in which Martha and Alfred were agents, also failed to practice compartmentalization.

Martha in the evil of Nazism and quickly reversed her friend's mild infatuation with the regime.⁶⁹

One of Mildred's first actions was to take Martha to see a Nazi labor camp where a number of Berlin leftists were still imprisoned after the spring purges. Within a week or two of meeting Martha, Mildred took her to see an example of Nazism's evil.

One day an American girl I had met, who was studying social conditions in Germany, called up and asked if I wanted to see a labor camp and a concentration camp.⁷⁰

Mildred and Martha drove out to the labor camp *Arbeitsdienstlager*,⁷¹ "a few hours from Berlin." A representative from the Nazi Propaganda Ministry and a young Foreign Office attaché accompanied them.⁷²

During the trip, the Propaganda representative regaled Martha with how progressive German penal policy was; the attaché tried to "moderate [his] propaganda" as Mildred worked less obviously on her. Martha "scorned [the attaché's] efforts to disillusion [her] and felt blissfully happy that a less cynical person was with us." Martha and her friends toured the "model camp." She reported that she

⁶⁹ Martha used this phrase to describe Mildred's approach to American author Thomas Wolfe [see below] but it is equally applicable to this situation.

⁷⁰ Dodd, *Through Embassy Eyes*, p.37. Given that Mildred and Arvid fled Berlin in the summer of 1933 this had to have been within weeks of Martha's arrival. "One day" distorts the reader's sense of how soon after Martha's arrival this occurred.

⁷¹ Many German Communists and others of the far left were arrested in the spring of 1933 and interned in camps like this. Those interned included Harro Schulze-Boysen, a future leader in the Berlin Rote Kapelle, and author Hans Fallada. Both are discussed below.

⁷² Armand Bérard, assistant to French Ambassador to Germany, François Poncet.

found nothing there to make her question the benevolent purpose of these institutions or the 'truth' of the propaganda minister's descriptions. The camp's utter lack of militarism especially impressed her.⁷³

On the ride home, Mildred ["my friend," according to Martha,] saw some men "in strange positions in an open field,"⁷⁴ Mildred had the car stopped and jumped out to show Martha that the men were soldiers practicing military drills. She quietly told Martha, "You see, this is what they really do. The camp we have just been in was forewarned that we were coming.... We ran on this one accidentally and you can see the difference!" There had been no sign of military personnel or militarism in the camp, a feature Martha found most appealing. In relating the incident, Martha wrote that she "pooh-poohed" her friend's explanation because she was "an enemy [of the Nazis] trying to find the worst things in the nation." Still, Martha remembered pausing "a moment in astonishment as [she] saw the strange and irritated look on the face of the propaganda representative."⁷⁵ His look, she concluded, confirmed her friend's point.

Martha's tilt towards fascism did not last much beyond this trip. The weight of her experiences, like the trip with Reynolds and Bill or the one with Mildred,

⁷³ Martha's statement that the Nazis did not appear militaristic strains the credibility of her claim that she was initially drawn to the excitement of Nazism. After all, she suggests the pomp and excitement of Nazism swept her up. A part of this pomp and excitement was militaristic displays of Hitler's Brown Shirts.

⁷⁴ The connection between a prison camp and military drills is puzzling here. Martha may have collapsed two trips into one to make a point. She may also have sought to disguise her activities to the Nazi's who might have pieced her clues together. Or, perhaps, there was no connection between the two events except that they occurred on the same trip.

⁷⁵ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, p.38.

quickly added-up. The anti-Semitism of the Nazi regime was vicious and Martha would have no part in it. The violence of the Brown Shirts convinced her that militarism was indeed central to Hitler's power. And the influence of her friends, family, and previous education combined to convince her that there was nothing appealing in Nazism after all.

As Martha's anti-fascism grew, her friendship with Mildred deepened. They began collaborating on a number of projects. During Martha's first year in Germany the two women produced a weekly book review column entitled "Brief Reviews" for an English language paper.⁷⁶ Martha reviewed works of experimental fiction under the pseudonym "Wesley Roper;" Mildred reviewed the proletarian writers.⁷⁷ The column lasted for about a year. They also sought to draw out and organize what, in their perception, was left of the literary culture of Germany in Berlin. They hosted two teas and made individual visits to leftist writers seeking to keep lower profiles since the Nazis came to power. By including Martha when she reached out to leftist writers and intellectuals to gain anti-fascist allies, Mildred drew Martha into the anti-fascist underground in Germany.

Several factors drew them together that summer of 1933. They shared a common background. Both were from Protestant families whose roots reached back into colonial America. Both had spent many years in academia in Midwest universities. More importantly, Martha and Mildred shared a strong love of literature

⁷⁶ Martha also wrote as a weekly feature writer on cultural matters in Berlin for the Hearst papers [Metcalf, 1933, p.193].

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.193. Martha also compiled a file on Mildred including clippings and other material; see Box 13, File 14, part 2, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

and the intellectual life. Likewise, their political sentiments were similar and decidedly to the left of the liberal center of the day. Their intellectual culture was inseparable from their political and revolutionary work.

A set of notes that Martha compiled as part of the process of writing about her friend suggest how much their mutual love of literature was at the center of their relationship. She wrote:

Evenings at her apartment. Lit. __staying overnight.
Covering me with blanket.
Shaking hands with Walter. [It is not clear who Walter was.]
Column in English Newspaper in Berlin. [See below.]
Short Stories. [Martha and Mildred shared their writing and commented on each other's work.]
"bathroom" talks [because the water could be turned on to thwart Nazi listening devices.]
Thom Wolfe, Rowohlt, Steinbeck, Faulkner, "Light in Aug[unclear]" [See below.]
Parks, cages.
Hans Fallada, collaborator of her husband. [See below.]
_____children.
Underground not openly discussed. Certain [word unclear] unbelievable.⁷⁸

Of the things about Mildred, Martha most fondly remembered, five had to do with literature, four with the German underground.

Mildred and the nascent underground resistance did not provide Martha's only opportunity for socializing or education. Her mother had been terribly mistaken regarding the absence of a social life in Nazi. The endless rounds of diplomatic social functions kept all of the Dodds in constant contact with the various cultural and political groups in and around Berlin, embassy officials, German businessmen, entertainers and

⁷⁸ Undated, [Notes], box 12, file 13, part 2, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. Comments in brackets are this author's.

sundry others. The Dodds detested this social life - especially the elitism of the classes that engaged in this level of socializing and the phoniness they saw in it.

Although they minimized the number of *faux pas* committed, the Dodds made certain social errors to snub the Nazis. Ambassador and Mrs. Dodd would sometimes ignore custom and leave functions early. Their parties would include disparate groups - Nazis and others invited to tweak Nazi sensitivities and serve fare like beer and sausages, rather than a fancy French meal. Nor were the elder Dodds alone in their silent protest. At Martha's first birthday party in Germany, October 1933, she played the *Horst Wessel* song - the nearest thing to a national Nazi anthem - at an intimate social gathering, insulting the Nazis who were invited; apparently they felt to play the song at such a gathering was a sign of disrespect. Bill so detested the Nazis that he left Germany in 1934, as soon as he defended his dissertation.⁷⁹ The family was carefully iconoclastic.

Martha also cultivated a number of personal relationships. She was politely remembered as being "a flirt," "a social butterfly," by Stewart Herman, a minister of the American Church in Berlin until 1941. He recalled that Martha dated both SS members and leftists. Evidence suggests Martha was more than a "flirt," that she was, instead, promiscuous; one even suggested that she was a spy, but this will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Bill wrote a family biography of the Blairs, Colonial American aristocrats, for his dissertation.

⁸⁰ These included Mrs. Truman Smith, wife of the American military attaché. She was interviewed by the FBI in 1950, Katrina vanden Heuvel, and Shareen Brysac more recently. Since the story she told the FBI in 1950 is the same one she told in the 1990's, the reader may conclude that her claim that Martha was rumored to be a spy was accurate. In the next chapter, the rumor will be seen to have been true. Another who commented unfavorably was Fritz, the butler in the American embassy. See vanden

While in Germany, Martha had affairs with at least the following persons: Boris Winogradow - a Soviet official; Ernst Udet - a noted German aviator; Rudolf Diels - the head of the Prussian Secret Police; Prince Louis Ferdinand - Crown Prince of Prussia; Thomas Wolfe - noted American author; and Armand Bérard - a French diplomat. Martha's liaisons scandalized enough persons that report of her affairs was sent to Washington. Raymond Geist, acting Consul General, reported that Martha publicly addressed Rolf Diels as "dearie."⁸¹ Rumor had it that young men in the German Foreign Ministry were forbidden to date her due to her friendships in the Soviet Embassy.⁸² Several Germans lamented the fact they were unable to turn Martha to their side by pulling her into a love affair with a loyal Nazi.⁸³

The prohibition could not have been too strict for Martha maintained contact with several important Nazis even after her trip to Russia. She socialized with Ernst "Putzi" Hanfstaengl, Hitler's friend and private entertainer. It was "Putzi" who introduced Martha to Hitler soon after her arrival in 1933. He hoped that *der Fuhrer* might take to the young American and court her; neither impressed the other and nothing came of the meeting. Another sometime beau was the young, blond Nazi, Hans Thomsen, an early frequenter of the Dodd residence as a social acquaintance of Martha. Thomsen was the

Heuvel, "Grand Illusions"; Brysac, Resisting Hitler, p.157. Herman Interview with Dr. Douglas Wheeler, 7/18/1990.

⁸¹ Wilbur Carr, Confidential Memo, 6/5/1935, Wilbur Carr Papers, LOC; quoted in Brysac, Resisting Hitler, p.157.

⁸² vanden Heuvel, "Grand Illusions," p.248.

⁸³ Hitler's Table Talk (New York: Enigma Books, 2000), p.102.

one who objected to the playing of the *Horst Wessel* song at Martha's birthday.⁸⁴

Weinstein reported that Martha told a Soviet contact that she dated German Ernst Udet in order to get information.⁸⁵ She may have also used German social contacts to give her a pro-fascist cover. Shareen Brysac noted that Diels reported that the Nazis thought Martha was in their "camp" until her surprise trip to the USSR during the summer of 1934.⁸⁶ This is surprising given that Martha began her affair with Boris Winogradow, a Soviet diplomat, six months earlier; both the affair and the visit to Russia are detailed below.

Of the Nazis Martha dated, the one who was most significant to Martha was Rudolf Diels, the young architect of the Prussian secret police that later became the Gestapo. Diels was a fallen social democrat who had served in the Weimar Republic investigating Communist activity in Prussia. He created a "nervousness and tension" when he walked, no "crept," into a room as if on "cat's feet," according to Martha. "His eyes were black and cruel" his face, "sensitive" and "beautiful" but "broken [by a] ...sinister" scar that marred his cheek and disfigured his mouth. This "human monster" "fascinated" and "intrigued" her.⁸⁷

Martha met Diels after she moved away from her initial fascination with Nazism, i.e. the fall of 1933. Her correspondence with American author Thornton Wilder

⁸⁴ Metcalfe, 1933, p.195. Thomsen, although married, attended the party with Elmina Rangabe, daughter of the Greek Ambassador and a friend of Martha's. More is developed on Rangabe below.

⁸⁵ Allen Weinstein and Alexei Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America (New York: Random House, 1999), pp.63 to 65.

⁸⁶ Brysac, Resisting Hitler, p.160.

⁸⁷ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, pp.51-57.

suggests that this relationship was serious through December of 1933.⁸⁸ Martha wrote poetically to Wilder about Diels stalking under her window: "The snow is soft and deep lying here - a copper smoke mist over Berlin by day and the brilliance of the falling moon by night. The gravel squeaks under my window at night - the sinister faced, lovely lipped and gaunt Diels ...must be watching me."⁸⁹ Diels cultivated the American Embassy's favor to enhance his position in the Nazi government before Hitler consolidated his power, to provide him some protection from the vicissitudes of internecine Nazi politics, and to develop sources of intelligence that he could use in his job. Martha remained fairly close to him for a year or so and continued to see him from time to time after that.⁹⁰

Diels taught her about the "intrigues and inter-party struggles and hatreds" of the Nazis. He drew her along through hint and clue, via indirect means, to realize that the Embassy and residence were bugged, the telephones tapped, the servants not to be trusted. Diels' hints led Martha to cover the telephones in a room with padding when she was discussing something not to be overheard. She convinced her father to do the same and he promptly stuffed a small cardboard box with cotton batting to place over his telephone when he had meetings in his office.

Martha learned the scope of Nazi espionage against the American embassy, the other embassies, the German people, and each other. Before her self-described "romantic eyes" appeared "a vast and complicated network of espionage, terror, sadism and hate, from which no one, official or private, could escape." This world of intrigue seduced

⁸⁸ Brysac, Resisting Hitler, p.154.

⁸⁹ Letter, Martha Dodd to Thornton Wilder, 12/14/1933, quoted in Brysac, Resisting Hitler, p.154.

⁹⁰ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, pp.38, 54-55.

Martha in a subtle manner.⁹¹ She felt Diels's subtle revelations placed her "into a nervous state that almost bordered on hysterical." More than unseen spies caused her unease. She feared that "by some subtle probing" Diels would "draw out information from me about my German friends, which would cause their death." Part of Diels' game in introducing her to the methods of his secret police was to scare her and other diplomats for the sake of "personal power." His psychological games backfired, according to Martha, as they "established in our minds and souls [i.e. the Dodd family's] certain incontrovertible facts and attitudes toward Nazi dictatorship that were to lead us to a complete and uncompromising analysis."

Martha later argued in her memoir that her anti-fascism stemmed from this "uncompromising analysis." In fact, as was described earlier, Martha's went to Germany predisposed to be an anti-fascist. The strongest influence in this was the strong imprint of her father's Progressive roots and his resentment towards social privilege. Martha's reading, her radical mentors also prepared her for her rejection of fascism and her adoption of antifascism. Chapter 2 continues to describe the path of Martha's intellectual development by showing that the emergence of Martha's anti-fascism is only half the story of her passion and her hope. The other - and equally important - part was the Martha's conversion to Stalinism and her involvement in Soviet intelligence.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp.51 to 57.

Chapter 2

Juliet # 1 - Martha and the Anti-Nazi Resistance, 1934 to 1937

Martha's Second Great Love

As Martha began to shake the influence of Diels, a new man entered her life, Boris Winogradow, Press Attaché and later First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Berlin. Boris, a committed Communist, wooed Martha and won her heart. Over the next three-years he influenced her ideological development as she began to combine anti-fascism with Stalinism. Mildred and Arvid Harnack, likewise, continued to influence Martha's political development, even as they formed an underground resistance group that, later, turned to espionage as well. From time to time, this led to conflicts between the Harnacks and Winogradow over Martha. Martha's tour of the Soviet Union during the summer of 1934 and her growing connections to the underground resistance through the Harnacks firmly cemented Martha's commitment to the faith of a fellow traveler. Boris, in turn, recruited Martha for the NKVD and set her on a path that would bring her into conflict with her homeland. This chapter examines how the flowering of Martha's love for Boris and her intellectual commitment to the utopian vision expounded by the Soviet Union, led her to be recruited by Soviet intelligence

When the Dodds had first arrived in Berlin, Boris was on an extended stay in Moscow. In an unpublished memoir, "Bright Journey Into Darkness," Martha wrote that

she first met Winogradow in September 1933.¹ She was at a local pub where a handsome, tall, Russian who spoke little German and no English introduced himself to her.² After chatting for a time during which neither understood the other well, they went dancing at the hot nightclub Ciro's. They found, in Martha's words, that the relationship "took."³ They saw each other on weekends and afternoons for several months before their relationship became widely known. For Martha, Boris was the second great love of her life; Bassett had been the first.

Boris was six years older than Martha, tall, brown-haired, and had greenish-tawny eyes. His manner was gentle but he had a keen and ironic, even "mad" sense of humor. Journalist Edgar Ansel Mowrer remembered Boris' open personality. The Secretary talked freely to reporters unlike other Soviets Mowrer had known. As a protégé of Vyacheslav Molotov, Boris was given some liberty to "to indulge his non-proletarian tastes."⁴ William Shirer⁵ remembered Winogradow's taste for "the so-called good things

¹ Martha Dodd, "Bright Journey Into Darkness," Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

² Martha had first remembered meeting Boris at a party at Chicago Tribune correspondent Sigrid Schultz's house. Schultz, though, told her that the party she was thinking of had been on January 20, 1934. Bill, Armand Bérard, Agnes Schneider of the American Consulate, and several foreign press reporters also attended the party according to Schultz's diary [Letter, Sigrid Schultz to Martha Dodd, 4/14/1970, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC]. Since it appears that Martha wrote "Bright Journey Into Darkness" after her correspondence with Schultz and others between 1969 and 1970, she must have realized that she met Winogradow somewhere other than at Schultz's party.

³ Letter, Martha Dodd to Agnes Knickerbocker, 7/16/1969, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴ Shareen Blair Brysac, Resisting Hitler: Mildred Harnack and the Red Orchestra (New York: Oxford, 2000), p.156. Martha encouraged similar tastes in Molotov for whom she bought several jazz recordings.

⁵ Martha remembered journalist William Shirer and his wife Tess as good friends from Germany. She maintained a regular correspondence with them until her death. In a

in life." Boris made quite a ceremony of putting on his leather driving gloves before getting behind the wheel of "his passion," a Ford Roadster.⁶ His panache and personality served him well in his relations with the press and other diplomats, many of whom remembered him fondly.

Martha described her love for Winogradow as "one of those absorbing things that has no political base at all."⁷ This is odd, because from almost the beginning it had a serious political/ideological component to it, i.e. Martha's growing commitment to the Soviet Union. It is also unclear how absorbed with Martha Boris truly was. In March 1934, the Berlin station chief - the ranking NKVD operative in Germany - received a telegram from his superiors. "We ask Winogradow to write [Martha] a warm friendly letter [and] to invite her to a meeting in Paris where...[other intelligence agents] will carry out necessary measures to draw Martha into our work."⁸ The details of this meeting are unknown but, over the course of the next year, the NKVD cultivated Martha through Winogradow and others. Implicit in the cable was the fact that the Soviets had Martha under examination for some time and considered her sufficiently developed politically to

May 3, 1990 letter [copy in author's possession] from Shirer to Dr. Douglas Wheeler, Shirer noted that "all I know about her case I put down in A Native's Return." If this were so, Shirer knew very little about Martha as he does little more than note her presence in the work. Their friendship belies this.

⁶ The correspondence referenced here comes from a file of information Martha collected as research material for the complete story of her years in Germany. It is in the Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Allen Weinstein and Alexei Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America (New York: Random House, 1999), p.51, second ellipses and "[and]" appear in Weinstein's text.

recruit her; this too makes it less likely that Martha was pro-Nazi for any extended period of time.

The recruitment of Martha took many months. During this time, her friends, Mildred and Arvid Harnack were influential. Although no evidence suggests that the Harnacks actively worked to make Martha a Soviet agent, they did work to indoctrinate her in the Communist faith. At the same time, Boris worked with the NKVD to evaluate Martha and to deepen her commitment to Communism in order to recruit her. This led to conflicts between Winogradow and the Harnacks.

Martha does not appear to have had any formal training in tradecraft from the Soviets. At no point during her years in Germany was she gone long enough to have had any formal training such as that described by some other agents.⁹ When a new contact interviewed her in the United States in 1941, Martha expressed concern that she, apparently, knew so little about the theory and practical aspects of intelligence work.¹⁰ Because Boris acted as Martha's case officer, her liaison to the NKVD, he must have given her any instruction she received. The lack of training for intellectuals like Martha, recruited for espionage, was also typical of those in the Berlin *Rote Kappelle* and several espionage rings in the United States.¹¹

One incident reveals both the education Martha received and the friction caused by the pull on her of two complimentary, yet different influences. On May 27, 1934,

⁹ For example, see Ruth Werner, Sonja's Report (Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1980).

¹⁰ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood (New York: Random House, 1999), pp.63-65.

¹¹ See below for more detail.

Martha, Boris, and the Harnacks, along with Heinrich Ledig-Rowholt, the son of a left wing, German publisher Ernst Rowholt, traveled into the countryside to visit Hans Fallada, a writer of proletarian reputation. The Nazis had arrested and beaten Fallada in 1933, along with many liberals, socialists, and Communists, but was released after a brief imprisonment. He was interned at the camp Mildred had taken Martha to several months earlier. Martha and her friends wanted "to understand what was happening to a liberal writer who had seemed to understand at least a little of the struggle of simple people (little men)."¹²

Martha's account in Through Embassy Eyes illustrates something else too. According to the memoir, Martha and "some friends" found Fallada 'hiding out' at his home in a small village near Mecklenburg, several hours drive from Berlin. Fallada lived there with his "buxom, simple wife" and their two children. Arriving after being caught in a spring thunderstorm, Martha found the writer "isolated from life and happy in his isolation ...and though [she] got the impression he was not and could not be a Nazi - what artist is? [she] felt a certain resignation in his attitude." Martha regretted his withdrawal and suggested that his "intellectual and emotional passivity" would have a baneful effect on his talent.¹³

The meeting with Fallada made a "permanent impression" on Martha according to her account:

¹² Fallada's real name was Rudolf Ditzen. Under the pseudonym, Hans Fallada, Ditzen wrote Little Man, What Now? [*Kleiner Man, was Nun?*]. For a detailed description of the trip made with somewhat different emphases, see Brysac, Resisting Hitler, pp.148-150.

¹³ Martha Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes (New York: Garden City, 1940), pp.83-85.

[She] saw the stamp of naked fear on a writer's face for the first time. His nervous self-justification, his escape and final loathsome surrender recur often to my mind these days when American, not German, Fascism is attempting to intimidate us, silence our voices.¹⁴

The point of this interlude in Through Embassy Eyes and for Martha's life in general is not subtly made. For Martha the effect of fascism on the artist was the greatest evil of the Nazi regime; this theme proved to be a unifying theme in most of her work.

The story about Fallada illustrates something else. Martha's account in Through Embassy Eyes consists of purposeful silences and distortions. The most significant of these was the fact that the Harnacks, Boris Winogradow, and left-wing publisher Hans Ledig-Rowohlt accompanied her.¹⁵ These were the "friends" with whom Martha traveled to see Fallada in Feldburg; two persons who had been building their cover to engage in anti-Nazi resistance efforts, a noted left wing publisher - who probably arranged the meeting, and a Soviet embassy employee. It was an odd party to visit a writer in self-imposed seclusion because he feared the Nazis and wished to avoid further persecution for his left wing politics. The group was quite brazen given that Winogradow drove them in his Ford.

Phillip Metcalfe suggests that Mildred attempted to recruit Fallada for anti-fascist underground work and failed.¹⁶ The line of questioning described by Shareen Brysac, the biographer of Mildred Harnack, clearly suggests this was Mildred's intent

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Through Embassy Eyes made the life of Elmina Rangabe, the daughter of the Greek ambassador to Germany, difficult after the War because of "indiscreet" references Martha made; see Letter, 9/9/1946, Elmina Hadji-Argyris [née Rangabe] to Martha Dodd, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

¹⁶ Philip Metcalfe, 1933 (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1988).

in talking to Fallada. Furthermore, Mildred may well have been successful. The earliest draft of Martha's article on Mildred contains the following cryptic item: "Hans Fallada, collaborator of her husband." It is not clear what Martha meant but the context clearly suggests that she thought Mildred recruited Fallada for underground resistance work, i.e. pamphleteering, not necessarily espionage which came several years later. Evidence for Mildred's success in recruiting Dietzen, though, is lacking. The Nazis did not capture and execute Fallada for espionage as they did Mildred, Arvid, and many others who worked with them in the Rote Kappelle. This suggests that Fallada's role must have been limited to work before the war and so he avoided the trouble the Harnacks would face later.

Another matter ignored in her memoir was the heated argument that arose between Arvid and Boris. Martha remembered the incident in her 1975 letter to Ledig-Rowohlt: "Do you recall this day at all? It was, I think, in the autumn of 1933 [sic], and there was a heated argument at the table." Although the subject of the argument is unclear, it was likely ideological; Arvid had taken it upon himself to develop Martha's political/philosophical commitment to Communism.¹⁷ Boris was both a good Stalinist and a Communist who enjoyed the material pleasures of the West. Returning to Berlin, "Boris told [Martha] later he didn't like the Harnacks and I shouldn't see them much, which I didn't, except in the first couple of years, when Mildred and I edited a book page in an English weekly in Berlin."¹⁸ Even in this

¹⁷ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, p.52.

¹⁸ Letter, Martha Dodd to Heinrich Ledig-Rohwolt, 10/19/1975, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

letter to Ledig-Rowohlt, an old friend, Martha distorted her relationship with Mildred. The date of the trip may have been an unintentional error; the claim about when she last saw the Harnacks was not.

At other times, the influences of the Harnacks and Boris worked in harmony. Each of these friends, for example, pressed Martha to tour the Soviet Union and so she began planning a field trip. Martha explained her decision in making this trip, by arguing that: "no human being at any time in any age could possibly have been responsible for as many things as the Nazis described again and again" in connection with the Soviets. The Germans, she continued, described Russia as a nation of "baby eaters and untold tortures." These stories quickly assumed "proportions of ridiculousness."¹⁹ Martha, not believing the stories, had to see the truth for herself according to her memoir. Already well disposed to reject this, Martha found the clear refutation of the Nazi calumnies as well as many others.²⁰ In so presenting her motivation, Martha continued to suggest in her memoir that, until her trip to Russia in 1934, fascism still exercised a pull on her sympathies. As seen above, this could not be true. In her memoir, Martha made it appear that her infatuation with fascism lasted longer than it did for dramatic effect and to suggest that it was her experience of Russia that made her an anti-fascist.

¹⁹ Given the famines in Russia in the early twenties and the deaths of millions of Russian peasants in Stalin's collectivization efforts between 1928 and 1932, there was probably a strong element of truth in even the ghastly descriptions.

²⁰ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, p.131.

Potemkin Iconography

Martha's tour followed the usual channels for a fellow traveler. She booked a tour of the Soviet Union and left on the morning of July 6, 1934.²¹ Boarding a "beautiful trimotor Junker plane" at 7 a.m. she took her first airplane ride, "determined to see the workings of another system so often compared to Germany." German newspapers criticized the trip. Her parents expressed concern. Seeing her off, William Dodd remarked, "It seems like a wild goose chase to me;" Martha did not say what her father thought she was chasing. Martha Johns expressed even less optimism; she thought the Soviet Union was "a disease infested, barbaric wilderness." To allay her parents' fear about her traveling unaccompanied Martha had told them that she was to meet friends on the plane. Weinstein reports that Winogradow met Martha in Moscow and other intelligence officers observed her throughout her trip in order to further judge her fitness for intelligence work.²² Correspondence from Boris to Martha, though, suggests the two fought and spent the next several weeks trying to work out their conflict.

From July 6 to August 7, 1934, Martha toured the USSR on an elaborate, semi-private tour. Martha appears to have had few fellow tourists for much of trip, but her tour was not a typical 'package tour.' Tours had been given to noted fellow travelers in the worlds of literature and science for years as the Soviets found it a valuable way to

²¹ Given Soviet restrictions on the freedom of movement at the time all such tours were closely watched and directed to present the USSR in the best light. David Caute discusses the propaganda value of these tours in detail in The Fellow Travelers.

²² Weinstein and Vasilliev, The Haunted Wood, p.51.

cultivate those opinion leaders whose sympathy they desired.²³ Given the interest the NKVD had in Martha, it is not surprising she got the same treatment.

Martha noted the few times she was joined by fellow tourists, but these simply indicate how often she appeared to travel with only a "young woman" who guided her. The woman's name, personality, and position were not revealed. This was also true with the people with whom she socialized throughout her trip. The reader learns that Martha dined with "one or two friends," talked with an old, American Communist and little else. In sharp contrast to the rest of her memoir, Martha does not "drop-names" or provide in-depth analyses of personalities. The only person she mentions by name is U.S. Ambassador William Bullitt about whom she made disparaging remarks.

Martha's description of her tour well illustrates the lessons the Soviets wanted her to learn. Her first stop was the former city of St. Petersburg, then Leningrad. She found Leningrad to be "drab and smoky," although potentially "one of the most beautiful cities in Europe." She was amazed "by the poverty that still existed." This underside, though, was silver-lined. The "class [she] was used to seeing and living with all [her] life," i.e. the destitute, "was nowhere in evidence." In spite of the poverty "movies, parks, lectures, entertainment, theatres and ballets [were] in abundance for the simplest and poorest person to enjoy. ... there was no exploitation, no sign of vast differences between the rich and the poor (because a classless society was slowly being effected)." Contrary to her mother's expectations, the Soviets did not destroy things and places of beauty, but maintained them and used them for "educational purposes or for medical or recreational

²³ Cate, The Fellow Travelers, chapter 4.

centers.” What pleased Martha the most, though, “was the absolute lack of military display.”²⁴

Leaving Leningrad, Martha traveled to Moscow where she spent several days on a whirlwind tour of the city. She wrote: “I felt much more energetic and cheerful here than I did in Leningrad and so rushed into a week of hectic and fascinating sightseeing;” “One day we went to a Prophylactorium,” a home for retired prostitutes. On another day “Ambassador Bullitt called ...and asked me to lunch.” Going to the U.S. Embassy the next day “[she] met a few members of Bullitt’s staff and decided that my time would be better spent in my study of Russian conditions if I gave the American Embassy a wide berth.” She “spent an afternoon in the Kremlin” and, “one night before [she] left,” Martha had dinner with “two or three” who apparently accompanied her in the city.²⁵ Her narrative suggests she spent a long, leisurely time seeing Moscow, but this is not entirely accurate. Martha only spent three nights, two full days of sightseeing. The days she traveled were taken up almost completely with travel and so cannot count. The activity she described took place in a very short time.

Martha found the people in Moscow “gayer and better dressed” than those in Leningrad. In Moscow, Martha wrote, “one felt ... that the struggle [to realize the goal of the Revolution] was over.” Reflecting on her visit to the Prophylactorium, she noted how Russia had ended prostitution by providing universal employment, easy marriage and easy divorce, and by removing the rich and corrupt class who could afford and support prostitutes. Everywhere the promise of socialism was being realized.

²⁴ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, pp.171 to 176.

²⁵ Ibid., pp.178 to 181.

One thing that disturbed Martha was seeing the museums that preserved the memory of Czarist Russia. At the Kremlin, the riches of the old order called to her mind “a picture of blood, misery, gaunt starvation of millions of people whose very lives had been sucked away by church and state.” The “Revolution, in simple human terms, [became] more visually and graphically understandable” through this ostentatious display. The graphic reminder of past wrongs, though, did not discourage Martha. She saw that the hardship the Soviet peoples had been through since the Revolution must have been worthwhile. She left Moscow for Gorki “freer and lighter” than when she had departed Leningrad three days earlier. “The conscience and idealism that lie latent in most of mankind were being stimulated and awakened” in her by the example of the Soviet system.²⁶

Her trip continued with a cruise down the Volga River. During part of the boat ride, Martha spoke with an elderly American of German descent. Her companion, an ardent Communist, “bored [her] at times with his long-winded and wildly expressed partisanship....” For him, “nothing the Russians had done or could do was wrong!” Martha, it should be remembered, committed herself to the Soviet future, not necessarily its present.

When she was not conversing with her long-winded companion, Martha was burning herself “to a crisp” sunbathing or dining on the fresh and varied provender that the ship’s kitchen had to offer. Her river experience, though, ended on a negative note. Upon arriving in Kazan, “a thriving industrial town,” Martha witnessed the sadness and despair of a woman frantic from the loss of a few kopecks on the ferry. Her agitated

²⁶ Ibid., pp.183 to 184.

behavior suggested to Martha that those few coins were all she had. The woman's poverty led Martha to note that "for the elimination of this forever from national life, the Russian state is bending its every effort ...one sees indications everywhere of progress being made."²⁷

From Kazan Martha traveled through Samara to Stalingrad as the wonders of the Soviet economy presented themselves to her. A tour of a tractor works and other manufacturing sights imparted to her the "growth and importance of the newly industrialized cities of the Soviet Union." This lesson was reinforced in Rostow and as she continued South towards the Black Sea. Martha learned how well the state took care of its workers, or at least how the Soviet Union wanted her to perceive how it took care of its workers. The "vast majority of the population was clean, provided medical and educational care, and supplied with everything good in life." Working hours were reasonable in length and the workers had a variety of culturally edifying diversions with which to amuse themselves. "There was no race hatred, no class antagonism, no grinding down of individuality under brutal economic laws that kept, in other countries, the poor always poor, the rich always richer." "The evidence of socialism was plentiful ... In almost every city one could see new buildings and factories, docks under construction, the life active, cheerful, reawakened, constructive."

Martha's tour ended in Kiev where all these lessons were driven home. "In Kiev is the marvelous ancient monastery, now a museum, which once owned and exploited 56,000 serfs -- the land is now successfully collectivized." Having learned what Russia was "really" like, she returned to Berlin via Warsaw, arriving on August 7, 1934. Her

²⁷ Ibid., 186 to 188.

parents barely recognized the dark young woman in the “brilliant Asiatic cap” as she disembarked from the train that evening in Berlin.²⁸

Although impressed by her Soviet experience, at first Martha did not fully commit herself to the vision of Russia she described in Through Embassy Eyes. Her memoir distorts the immediacy of her epiphany. Shareen Brysac notes that the Wingradow letters in the Martha Dodd Papers clearly suggest that, upon returning, Martha argued with her lover about the state of conditions in the Soviet Union. Boris scolded her. Under the Czars, he argued, things were much worse, the accomplishments and promise, not the current problems and failures, are what is important. By the time that Martha wrote her memoirs, she had clearly adopted this argument as her own.²⁹

In the beginning of Through Embassy Eyes Martha had reported her father's concern about the lack of freedom in Soviet Union.³⁰ At that point in her memoir, i.e. page seven, Martha told her readers that “[she] was to see and learn” whether or not her father was correct in his analysis. One hundred and ninety-five pages later Martha shows that her father was utterly wrong about the Soviet Union. Although her point is made with some filial piety, i.e. she does not explicitly criticize her father, she finds the Soviet Union to be a “democratic country in spirit and in plans.”³¹

Through her narrative, Martha showed that the USSR was not akin to Nazi Germany as William Dodd had suggested. The difference between the Nazis and the

²⁸ Ibid., pp.198 to 199; 202 to 203.

²⁹ Brysac, Resisting Hitler, pp.156-7.

³⁰ See p.39 and ff. above.

³¹ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, p.202.

Soviets, Martha argued, was stark; there was a diametrical opposition between their respective ideological/economic systems. The writings of Lenin, Stalin, and Marx, Martha claimed, "show quite different logic and ideals from those of Hitler, Rosenberg, Goering and Goebbels." The Nazis vilified the Soviets because they offered the German people a truly "progressive" alternative to Nazism. The Soviets threatened the power, prejudice and "capitalism" of the Nazi regime and so Hitler opposed Stalin. Although she still disliked dictatorship in all its manifestations and deplored the bureaucracy inherent in it, Martha perceived that there existed many profound differences in these two types of dictatorship and that made all the difference.³² In the Soviet Union, Martha had found the hope for a progressive future.

Like many others who took the guided tours of the USSR, Martha had been treated to an illusory vision of Russia. The Soviets presented their nation as a rough-hewn gem whose beauty and perfection were emerging day by day under the relentless, devoted, and jovial work of the free Russian people. By the time Martha wrote of her trip in 1939, she wrote, in good "social realist" style,³³ about a nation that had eliminated class prejudice and conflict; utopia was in sight. Her trip firmly implanted this vision in Martha's mind. The reality of this "Potemkin" vision, of course, was far less dazzling but Martha would not realize this for many years. She was dazzled by the illusion. Martha felt that Russia was progressing towards a heaven-on-Earth.

³² Ibid.

³³ Deliberately painting a picture, whether in words or on canvass, presenting reality according to one's vision of the future. See Richard Crossman, The God Who Failed (New York: Ballantine, 1954), especially Louis Fischer's essay.

Upon returning home at the end of 1937, Martha found America wanting in comparison. In her memoir, she concluded that America was becoming increasingly fascist. In State Department machinations against her father and the apparent appeasement of Hitler in his removal as Ambassador in 1937, Martha saw a nascent fascism. She suggests that the new American Ambassador, Hugh Wilson, would prove to be a fascist as the Nazis appeared pleased with his appointment. She found "men and women of the upper-money brackets of society who openly approved of Hitler and his methods," "professors who ...propagandize Hitler," "rich Jews who vote for reactionary Republicans," "workers who deplore joining unions and supporting groups united for action," and she saw "America participate inadvertently in the capitulation to Hitler and his war-mongers." In short, America was, at that moment, "fighting the destructive international Fascist spirit almost single-handed, aided surely by Russia."³⁴ This critical vision, even fear, of and for her homeland became central to the rationalization for all that she would do over the next 40 years.

Although many of Martha's contemporaries saw clearly the menace of the USSR, a significant number of left-oriented intellectuals like Martha placed their faith in the false vision described above. They did so for several reasons, each evident in the parts of

³⁴ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, pp.372 to 374. Martha sets up a clear contradiction by saying first that America is engaged in the appeasement of Germany, yet it is the only power besides the USSR fighting fascism. The resolution of this contradiction appears to rest in the conflict between anti-fascists like her father and those proto-fascists in the State Department and Congress who, she says, betrayed Dodd. Martha suggests that America itself is contradicted and so faces a choice between fascism and freedom, Germany and the USSR. The text itself, though, does not indicate if Martha was aware of this contradiction in her work.

Martha's life covered to this point.³⁵ Bright, talented, young leftists - often with a literary bent - became disillusioned with the promise of democratic progress and progressive liberalism. In the excesses of the twenties, these writers critically dismissed the American democratic tradition and embraced elements of an *au courant* nihilism and a bastardized Nietzschean understanding of the artist/writer as the culture-making force in society. Embodied, perhaps, by one of Martha's early correspondents, H. L. Mencken; Martha cited, for example, Mencken's edition of Nietzsche's Anti Christ as an important influence on her.³⁶

These Nietzschean influences were tempered by the longing for human fulfillment bequeathed them by Progressives like William Dodd; they showed signs of a nihilistic skepticism, but did not adopt such a world view.³⁷ In the devastation of the Great Depression, though, they saw the failure of western civilization/capitalism. Marxism, they thought, exploded the fallacies and pretensions of western liberalism and offered them an eschatological vision in which they placed their faith.

Embracing the Marxist eschaton, led these radicalized progressives like Martha down one of two routes. For some, the route chosen was a hard one. Those intellectuals

³⁵ Some like Malcolm Muggeridge and Bertrand Russell returned and wrote grim, realistic appraisals of the Soviet Union. Russell visited in 1919 and concluded from his experience that Russia would face a form of Napoleonic tyranny rather than genuine democracy [Caute, The Fellow-Travelers, p.21].

³⁶ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes.

³⁷ Raymond Aron has suggested that the fellow traveler was characterized by "a Protestant moralism swung round into rejection of the social order." Raymond Aron, trans. Daniel J. Mahoney, In Defense of Political Reason: Essays by Raymond Aron (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1994), p.121. This dissertation supports Aron's contention and suggests that Martha's life proves his point.

who actually joined the Communist party found a life of service, work, and a status in this new movement akin to that of a social pariah. The Communist, working class movement, looked askance at the bourgeois entrants. Richard Crossman described it in a similar manner:

The attraction of the ordinary political party is what it offers to its members; the attraction of Communism was that it offered nothing and demanded everything, including the surrender of spiritual freedom. ...The Communist novice, subjecting his soul to the cannon law of the Kremlin, felt something of the release which Catholicism also brings to the intellectual, wearied and worried by the privilege of freedom.³⁸

Whittaker Chambers described the same culture in his Witness; Chambers had joined the Communist Party of the US while it was still largely foreign born and foreign speaking. The brilliant, but decidedly odd, writer stood in stark contrast to the ethnic workers who made up the party. Chambers, too, makes the analogy between Communism and religious faith.

Intellectual converts like Martha, willing to make a four-fifths commitment to Communism, but not willing to die for their vision, experienced a less taxing form of Communism. In traveling along with the party, they thought of themselves as the movement's vanguard, not as petit-bourgeois pretenders who latched onto a wave of the proletarian future. They did not actually commit to party discipline as their working class "allies" did, but chose, instead, to travel along with the Party.

For these fellow travelers, the USSR was an icon of the "success" of "socialism in one country." Devotion to this image defined their faith even when the icon changed from the USSR to other nations or movements. The Intourist pilgrimages served as

³⁸ Crossman, The God That Failed, pp.5-6.

practical exercises in "social realism." Through these tours, tourists were introduced to an iconography that depicted the USSR as the pinnacle of freedom, progress, scientific development, and economic health. As Crossman noted, acceptance of this mythology was an act of will.

Martha and the Underground

Martha's commitment to this graven image of the Soviet Union deepened after her return to Berlin in August 1934. That fall, Martha's relationship with Boris became more serious by all appearances. While lunching at the Soviet Embassy in October 1934, H.A. Knickerbocker, his wife, Agnes, and Martha watched as an inebriated Boris raised a toast. "To Martha, my wife!" he announced. Although Boris was known for making outlandish statements and having an offbeat sense of humor, Martha felt his outburst was serious, or at least half-serious. She neither blushed nor felt "angry in the least."³⁹

As part of their relationship, Weinstein reports, Martha passed political and economic intelligence to the Soviets through Boris.⁴⁰ The contents of this intelligence is unknown but it is clear that she had access to information that the Soviets would have valued. She once wrote Thornton Wilder that she "knew some of the dirtiest tricks being played on the international chess board." Martha felt she balanced herself "not less gracefully than the other 400,000 angels on the pin point of European security." Remarking on her father's trust, Martha told Wilder: "We love each other and I am told

³⁹ Letter, Martha Dodd to Agnes Knickerbocker, 16 July 1969, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴⁰ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, p.52.

state secrets." According to her NKVD file, Martha willingly supplied this information to Winogradow. When he was transferred to Bucharest in June 1935, Martha continued to provide similar information to her new case officer, Dmitri Bukhartsev, according to Weinstein.⁴¹

It was at this time that the Soviets recruited Arvid and Mildred as intelligence agents. Since the Harnacks needed to maintain a pro-Nazi public image, they stayed away from the Dodd family, well known anti-fascists by then. Martha and Mildred, not surprisingly, saw less of each other over the next two years than they had during Martha's first year in Germany. Mildred and her husband were working to build a pro-Nazi image to hide their anti-fascist work; whereas, Martha's family was decidedly against the Nazi regime and Martha was, by then, involved with a Soviet diplomat. Still, during the summers of 1935 and 1936, Martha and Mildred spent time together welcoming and escorting noted American author, Thomas Wolfe, around Berlin. During these visits Martha witnessed Mildred turn her talents on Wolfe as she attempted bring the author into the anti-fascist cause. Martha, too, played a significant part in Mildred's effort, learning much from her friend's example.

Wolfe first visited Berlin in May of 1935 while touring Europe in order to see the world and spend the royalties his works had earned overseas.⁴² Their attempt to influence Wolfe began when Martha and Mildred welcomed the author to Berlin with

⁴¹ The letter to Wilder was quoted in Brysac, Resisting Hitler, pp.163-4. On passing information to the Soviets see Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, pp.51-52. Testimony to the FBI by Jack Soble and Boris Morros provides independent, albeit, second hand confirmation of this.

⁴² The 1936 visit will be discussed later in this chapter.

a literary tea. His recent book, Look Homeward, Angel was a critically acclaimed best seller and impressed her greatly. It sold very well in Germany and Wolfe earned many royalties. German law, though, forbade the export of currency as a measure to support the German economy. He could only spend his German royalties in Germany and so he made plans to travel there.

Even before Wolfe arrived, Martha began planning the welcome. Learning his itinerary from Wolfe's German publisher, her friend Ledig-Rowholt, she wrote the author while he was in England and invited him to tea at the American embassy upon his arrival in Berlin. To the tea, Martha and Mildred invited writers of the left who had been keeping low profiles since 1933. The pair succeeded in drawing the closeted writers into public; the chance to meet a famed American writer briefly overcame their fear of the Nazis and they came to the party.⁴³

Wolfe may not have made a good first impression with these guests. He appeared taken with the excitement of Nazi pomp and circumstance, much like Martha had been when she first arrived. Furthermore, Wolfe was no supporter of the Soviet Union and did not view its fellow travelers favorably, as is clearly shown in a letter he wrote to his publisher, Maxwell Perkins, during his stay in Berlin. He told Perkins that he planned to go to Moscow for the May Day celebrations:

because I am now planning a monumental work in three volumes on The Success of Russian Communism, and following the example of some of my American colleagues, I figure I shall need at least a week in Russia to gather the necessary materials.⁴⁴

⁴³ Andrew Turnbull, Thomas Wolfe, A Biography (Charles Scribner and Son; NY, 1968).

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Nowell, The Letters of Thomas Wolfe (New York: Scribners, 1956), p.442.

Wolfe never became a partisan of the Soviet Union as so many other writers of his day had.

Despite this, the effort to convince him of the evil of fascism appeared more successful. As noted, Mildred strove to educate him about its evils. Martha and Bill were equally engaged in the effort to educate Wolfe politically, even as Martha sought to approach him on a personal level too. Within days of his arrival, she pressed hard to know his "deepest feelings." Wolfe firmly rebuffed her on more than one occasion, admonishing:

About your wanting to hear ___ words from my own mouth of my loneliness and fear. At the present time I am not lonely or afraid, and even if I were, I would not be likely to talk about it with a young girl I met only a week ago.⁴⁵

Martha (and Bill) held long discussions of politics at the embassy with Wolfe that lasted into the wee hours of the morning. Wolfe often had breakfast at the American embassy with the Dodds the next morning. He was welcomed readily by Martha's parents and wrote home appreciably of the Dodds' hospitality.

Their relationship was something more as well. As Elizabeth Nowell compiled Wolfe's correspondence she found a number of letters concerning Martha that described her relationship with Wolfe in embarrassing language. Martha demanded that these letters be redacted as "they can have no serious import in the study of his life and letters and knowing Tom's recklessness and inaccuracy they might very well be of a slanderous quality regarding my life, both politically and morally." Nowell saw to it that the letters were "sealed and in the safe."

⁴⁵ Letter, Wolfe to MD, Undated, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

If the content were anything like the reminiscences not locked up at Harvard, it is clear why Martha demanded that the correspondence be kept secret. Shareen Brysac notes one comment Wolfe made to Heinrich Ledig-Rowohlt.⁴⁶ Wolfe also mentioned the affair to Belinda Jelliffe:

I rem, when Tom was telling me [about his affair with Martha, Jelliffe reported], I asked him to leave my house. He had apparently never heard about kissing and NOT telling. I can see his face, rueful and ashamed, because he DID realize that he shouldna did it.⁴⁷

Wolfe enjoyed Martha's company, attention, and attentions, but, in the end, did not share her commitments.

Mildred and Martha were unable to convert Wolfe to the antifascist cause on this first trip. He left Berlin in July 1935 without any clear anti-fascist sentiments. By the end of his return trip in 1936 for the Summer Olympic Games, though, Martha was convinced that he had "developed [his] later political understanding." She credited her Mildred with this change as:

[Wolfe] had great respect for [her] serious, patient, informed mind. Their friendship was known to few people. Mildred was forced always to be so cautious, because of her husband's and her own work and position, that it was a miracle that she could educate anyone at all.⁴⁸

Mildred had pressed him with the same criticism she had applied to Martha, "kind but always full of social awareness."

⁴⁶ Brysac, Resisting Hitler, p.179.

⁴⁷ Letter, Nowell to Martha Stern, 12/5/1956, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. See Wolfe and Belinda Jelliffe (Thomas Wolfe Society, 1987), p.96, footnotes to c.XII, #2 bMS Am 1883.1 (349), Box 1, Belinda to Nowell, Apr. 1 [1949].

⁴⁸ Since the Soviets recruited the Harnacks not long after Wolfe's first trip ended, this last comment suggests Martha knew of their work.

Martha confirmed this again to historian David Herbert Donald. She wrote him that she thought Wolfe was an anti-fascist by the time of his return from Germany in 1936 period. Wolfe does not appear to have embraced Martha's position on the Soviet Union, although he did agree with her about the danger posed by the Nazis. Martha marveled that Mildred could find the time needed to guide Wolfe's political education while avoiding the prying eyes of the Gestapo.⁴⁹

The attempted conversion of Wolfe was as much a lesson for Martha as was her trip to the prison camp or the journey to Fallada's. Mildred's ability to approach people "whose sympathy she wanted to enlist in the underground" fascinated Martha. One can almost picture her taking notes as Mildred subtly approached potential allies and she felt them out on the dangerous work of resistance.⁵⁰ Although the underground was "not openly discussed," Mildred clearly confided her work to Martha and Martha took her friend's example to heart.⁵¹ They worked together to draw out artists and others as shown in the case of their tea parties and the education of Wolfe. When Martha tried to write of Mildred in the mid-1980's, she claimed that she had been a member of the underground while in Germany; circumstantial evidence has suggested this was true. Furthermore, upon returning to the United

⁴⁹ Letter, Martha Stern to David Herbert Donald, [ca. spring 1984], Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁵⁰ Notes, [ca. 1947/48], Box, 13, File 12, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁵¹ Reminiscence [Undated], Box, 13, File 12, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

States, Martha applied an approach similar to that of Mildred in enlisting others to the causes she supported; clearly, Martha had learned much from her friend.⁵²

Martha and Boris were separated and feuding during both the first and second visits of Wolfe. In between they would alternately make-up and fight. Martha appeared, in part, to use Wolfe against Boris as she had Sandburg and Burnham against Bassett. As with Bassett, though, Martha sought reconciliation with Boris even after her affairs. On June 5, 1935, Boris reported to Moscow that Martha had just written to him that she still dreamed of marrying him. In response, Moscow decided to switch Martha to another case officer and recalled Winogradow to Moscow. Subsequently, he was transferred to Bucharest. Even after this, Boris returned to Berlin to visit Martha several times. In 1936, he was transferred to Warsaw. By Wolfe's second visit, Martha and Boris had had several fights; the one at Boris' first farewell in 1935 had been quite harsh.⁵³

Martha dated other people at several points in this tempestuous relationship as she began to use sex as a means to get close to people for political purposes. Some of her lovers, like Diels, Louis Ferdinand, Ernst Udet, and Armand Bérard, provided her cover and might have enabled her to obtain information about German intelligence, French diplomacy, or the German airforce, respectively. Martha thought these relationships helped to disguise her pro-Soviet sentiments, but they were also matters of the heart as she clearly continued to search for the romance she had dreamed of as an adolescent in Chicago.

⁵² See Chapters 4 and 5.

⁵³ Weinstein and Vassiliev, *The Haunted Wood*, p.52.

Meanwhile, the Harnacks began to bring together the friends and family who would make up their group in the Berlin Rote Kappelle. After Martha left Germany in 1937, these people began providing information to the Harnacks to pass on to the Soviets (and the Americans as Shareen Brysac has learned).⁵⁴ Mildred and Arvid were well prepared for this new approach to anti-Nazi resistance. Arvid had been building his cover as a pro-Nazi lawyer/economist over the previous two years. At the same time, he had cultivated a wide circle of friends from whom he would seek information. After Arvid was recruited in June 1935, he and Mildred curtailed their remaining public connections to anti-fascists and formed the first of three interrelated groups of the Berlin Rote Kapelle. Certainly by this time, Mildred and Martha had begun to reduce their contacts in order to protect better the Harnacks cover as a pro-Nazi family. As the Harnacks had begun to build this cover even earlier, it is probable that Martha and Mildred had cut back on their contacts sometime in 1934. Arvid, though, still regularly met with Martha to oversee her education in communist thought even six months after his recruitment as a spy, so it is likely Martha and Mildred continued to see each other regularly too.

The two friends maintained contact, even close at times, a distinct violation of a central tenet of tradecraft, compartmentalization.⁵⁵ The Berlin *Kappelle* was known for the close social connections between its members. The *kapelmeisters*, leaders, of each of the three rings maintained social contacts and friendships with each other. Harnack's ring was based upon his friendships in ARPLAN and his wife's literary

⁵⁴ Brysac, Resisting Hitler, pp.241-242.

⁵⁵ See footnote 58, p.54.

connections; the other rings were similarly based. He recruited the leaders of the other two groups, Harro Schulze-Boysen and Adam Kuckoff. The groups shared a radio operator named Rudolf Koppie according to Soviet defector Pavel Sudoplatov.⁵⁶ In its nature and origins, the Berlin Kappelle greatly resembled United States espionage rings like the Silvermaster Group and the Perlo Group that operated in New Deal and World War II Washington.

Martha knew many members of the Berlin *Kappelle*. Given the social nature of these groups, it is probable that Martha played a minor role in the ring herself. The record, at least, is clear that Mildred and Arvid were not Martha's only connections to the Communist Underground or Soviet espionage in Germany. Several of Martha's known friends and acquaintances were deeply involved in anti-Nazi resistance and Soviet espionage. Among those who can be clearly identified are Adam and Greta Kuckhoff, Jurgen Kuczynski, Elmina Rangabe, Vasilli Zarubin (also spelled Zubilin), Bukhartsev, Evgeny Gnedin and Boris Winogradow.

Adam Kuckhoff, assisted by his wife Greta, ran one of the three rings in the Berlin *Kapelle*. Their connection to Martha is unquestionable, but the details of their friendship are unavailable. No characters in Through Embassy Eyes may be correlated with the Kuckhoff's. No secondary source on the Rote Kapelle suggests a connection between them and Martha. Despite this, Martha's extant correspondence shows that she knew both Adam and Greta and considered them friends and allies. Following World War II, Martha maintained contact with Greta. Adam and the

⁵⁶ Pavel Sudoplatov and Anatoli Sudoplatov with Jerrold and Leona P. Schecter, Special Tasks [updated Edition, 1st paperback edition] (New York: Back Bay Books, 1995), p.139.

Harnacks, and other friends of Martha's in the underground had been executed for their role in the *Kapelle*. Martha sent care packages to Greta in the Soviet Zone of Germany and pressed her friends, Herta and Albert Norden, to talk to Greta about publishing Adam's prison letters in *Mainstream*, an American Communist magazine. Martha maintained contact with Greta even after fleeing to Prague, although later in life she found Greta's doctrinaire Stalinism trying.⁵⁷

Jurgen Kuczynski, a noted Communist economist, was another German friend of Martha's with strong ties to Soviet espionage and the anti-fascist underground. Kuczynski lived in Germany for the first several years Martha lived there. In 1935, he immigrated to London to lead the German Communist Party (*Kommuniste Partei Deutschland* or KPD) in exile. Correspondence between the two indicates the two had a friendly acquaintance while Martha was in Germany. In a letter to Martha, dated February 11, 1949, Kuczynski reminisced about visiting the Dodd family home at Round Hill while William Dodd was ambassador. In another letter from 1949, he suggestively wrote:

You write so little about your life that our relations which naturally are much too platonic from my point of view become more and more similar to those of the modern scientist towards nature: he pursues her with eager interest and love but ends up with the law of the indeterminability of her behavior.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Martha donated her correspondence with Greta to East Germany for "the Academy of Art or whatever." Letter, Martha Dodd to Mr. Lorf, Cultural Attaché of the DDR, undated, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC; Letter, Martha Dodd to Albert and Herta Norden, 5/29/1947, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁵⁸ Letter, Juergen Kuczynski to Martha Dodd, 2/11/1949, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

This closeness is significant because Jurgen Kuczynski was then the head of the KPD in London. At this time, he organized and recruited agents, both legal and illegal, for the Soviets. The most prominent of these was Klaus Fuchs, a major atomic spy that Kuczynski turned over to his sister, Ursula [also known as Ruth Werner], code-named "Sonja," an agent of the GRU, Soviet military intelligence.⁵⁹ Kuczynski later became a prominent leader in East Germany. Martha's connection to Kuczynski and her long friendship with him clearly suggest the range of her connections to the Soviet intelligence apparatus.

Martha also maintained close contact with several Soviet officials in Berlin engaged in Soviet intelligence operations. Besides Winogradow who recruited her, Martha was run by one legal "case officer," Evgeny Gnedin, and one illegal one, the Soviet named Bukhartsev who was mentioned above. Martha also developed a friendship with Vasilli Zarubin, another illegal who worked in Germany between 1935 and 1937. Zarubin used an American "shoe," i.e. a cover identity, to protect his operation from Nazi scrutiny; it is not known what Zarubin did at this time. His "shoe" said he represented the Paramount Film Studios as a talent scout and reported back to a producer for Paramount named Boris Morros.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ See Robert Chadwell Williams, Klaus Fuchs, and Ursula's autobiography, written under the pseudonym, Ruth Werner, Sonja's Report. It is not known whether Martha knew Ursula Kuczynski. In fact, the details of Martha's relationship to the Kuczynski family and to Klaus Fuchs and his family may well remain unknown. Shareen Brysac found the Fuchs file in the Martha Dodd Archive at Humboldt University in formerly Communist Germany had been purged except for one innocuous letter from Martha to a nephew of Klaus's. Brysac, Resisting Hitler, p.218.

⁶⁰ Zarubin's relationship to Martha is dealt with in detail later

Martha's work and that of her friends meant that she struggled to keep her Communist connections and sympathies under wraps.⁶¹ In January 1946, she explained to Bukhartsev that she carried on an affair with Prince Louis Ferdinand, Crown Prince of Prussia:

...because those who earlier treated her suspiciously because of her open relations with Winogradow now consider her previous passion "hearty" rather than political.⁶²

Her efforts, though, were not entirely successful. Many embassy employees during this time later suggested that Martha's left wing politics were well known.⁶³ Martha's claim in Through Embassy Eyes that her "liberalism" became well known in Germany after her initial fascination with the Nazis appears misleading.

In the face of the separation, Martha and Boris only met periodically and a triangle developed between Martha, Boris, and Moscow. In the fall of 1936, Martha agreed to continue to work in Germany if the Soviets needed her there rather than follow Bill into the International Peace Crusade.⁶⁴ For a time, Martha was quite shaken when her control, Bukhartsev, was executed as a Nazi collaborator in 1936, a victim of Stalin's ongoing purges.⁶⁵ Martha learned of the purges and feared that she may have been

⁶¹ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, pp.52-56.

⁶² Ibid., p.53.

⁶³ See, for example, vanden Heuvel, "Grand Illusions." Also, "Notes on Conversation between Dr. Douglas and Stewart Herman," 7/18/1990, copy in author's possession.

⁶⁴ See below for more on Bill's anti-fascist work at this time.

⁶⁵ Robert Conquest, The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties (New York: MacMillan, 1968).

compromised to the Germans. She also feared that Winogradow might fall victim to the purge.

Bill and the Peace Campaign

After the summer of 1935, Martha did not see as much of her brother Bill. As he "could not endure the Nazi scene," according to Martha, Bill fled from the country as soon as he earned his Ph.D., translated into German by Greta Harnack.⁶⁶ In August 1935, Bill toured the Soviet Union as his sister had the year before. He then flew to the United States and took a teaching position at William and Mary College. The chairman of the history department, Professor Bryan, was an old friend of the elder Dodd and had created a position for Bill. Dodd hoped Bill would make a mark at the school that would lead to a permanent position.

Bill taught "The Rise of Democracy and Industrialism in the United States, 1828-1876." He had two students the first semester, five the next.⁶⁷ At first, he appeared happy with his job. His mother's cousin, C. D. Johns, a chemistry professor at the Women's College of the University of North Carolina, noted that at the end of the first semester Bill seemed "altogether pleased with Williamsburg."⁶⁸

The pleasure did not survive the second semester. When Bill did not get a permanent job offer from William and Mary College, his father visited him in the

⁶⁶ Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, p. 369.

⁶⁷ FBI Report, Norfolk, VA, 1/21/1943, William E. Dodd, Jr., 101-4585-17.

spring of 1935. Dodd returned periodically to check in with the State Department and the President, to examine and rest at his property in Round Hill, and to check up on his son. Bill's partisan⁶⁹ views had not sat well with the faculty. Despite his popularity with a small group of students and his father's friendship with Bryan, William's lecturer position was not renewed. Father and son had a long talk. Writing to his wife, Dodd expressed regret that Bill was "always late, to see the bearings of conduct and attitude." He thought that Bill should moderate his partisanship and embrace the calling of the historian, i.e. objectivity.

In this, Ambassador Dodd expressed a hard won lesson:

Judge Moore⁷⁰ finds non-partisan nature of my speeches very valuable. If William does not wish to surpass me as a scholar I may be able to help him in other areas, but if he reveals strong partisan attitude in any direction it will be difficult to get anywhere. Perhaps he does not agree, but my experience entitles me to say a word now and then.⁷¹

During the 1920's, Dodd had received strong, well-founded criticism for his hagiography of Woodrow Wilson.⁷² Dodd's work on Wilson drew its strength from its partisan nature. Die-hard Wilsonians acclaimed it, but the criticism from his fellow historians was harsh and Dodd greatly resented it. Having learned this lesson,

⁶⁸ Letter, C. D. Johns to Martha Johns Dodd, 1/17/1936, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. In an undated letter to his mother, Bill said that Bryan had given him the job without checking his "history"

⁶⁹ The implications of the few comments on Bill's politics at this time were that they were Communist as opposed to socialist or social democratic which would have been more acceptable at this time in the New Deal.

⁷⁰ Assistant Secretary of State, R. Walton Moore.

⁷¹ Letter, William Dodd to William Dodd, Jr., William E. Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁷² William E. Dodd, Woodrow Wilson and His Work (New York: 1926).

Dodd complaint about Bill is ironic. The Jeffersonian idealism Dodd espoused could be as strongly partisan as any political position his son embraced.

Ambassador Dodd did not give up on his academic ambitions for Bill. He considered writing other friends to solicit a job for his son. He wrote the University of Virginia on Bill's behalf inquiring about teaching positions. Writing then to his wife, Dodd demanded: "How can he reverse [four years of schooling and another four of teaching]?," after all, "a scholarly reputation and career are far better than political performances."⁷³ Bill did not accept this advice and so decided to put academics aside to take a position in Europe with the *La Rassemblement Universel Pour La Paix* [RUP] or Universal Peace Campaign, an anti-fascist/Soviet front organization.⁷⁴ Although William Dodd was "unhappy for [his son]," he knew that Bill was excited about going to Geneva and he thought that the experience would be good for him. The elder Dodd expected this to be a short-term experience.

Others, apparently, were also aware of Bill's plans. While at Round Hill during May 1936, Dodd was contacted by "one man in New York," apparently a newspaper reporter, who wanted to express concern about "William serving League people at Geneva." Dodd told the reporter that he could come to Round Hill "if he kept it confidential." Neither the substance of these concerns is known, nor what the

⁷³ Letter, William E. Dodd to Martha Johns Dodd, 5/10/1936.

⁷⁴ See below for more detail.

reporter did with the information. Dodd accepted his son's plans and wished him well. Bill sailed for Geneva in June of 1936.⁷⁵

Bill thoroughly enjoyed his Peace Campaign work; his mother was quite concerned. She lamented that Bill was working for next to nothing, noting that he "has no money and cannot accumulate any to have a family and a home." She did not think it right that "his clothes look shabby and he needs many things." Bill had to rely regularly upon the support of his parents to supplement his RUP paycheck, which did not adequately cover his travel expenses much less living expenses.⁷⁶

These expenses were significant because his work took him all over the world. Bill left for his first trip soon after arriving in Belgium at Crusade headquarters. He was sent first to Shanghai, China. He arrived in China in the last day of July to conduct organizing visits and interviews looking for membership and donations for the Crusade. Upon arriving, Bill contacted a number of people he knew including his and Martha's friend Franz von Papen.⁷⁷ Bill then set off on a round of "visits and interviews."⁷⁸ He had planned a week at this but, on August 10, he wrote Martha: "I am having more success than I could have expected coming unprepared as I did." His

⁷⁵ Letter, ; Letter, William E. Dodd to Martha Johns Dodd and MD; Letter, 5/25/1936, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁷⁶ Letter, William E. Dodd to Martha Johns Dodd; and Letter, William E. Dodd to Martha Johns Dodd, 6/11/1936, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁷⁷ The son of Franz von Papen, the German Vice-Chancellor before Hindenburg's death in July 1934.

⁷⁸ The letter does not indicate what von Papen was doing in China at the time. His father had been demoted by Hitler following the 1934 Roehm purges and feared for his life

new plan was to leave on the 19th for Berlin via Moscow. He hoped Martha could set up a meeting with "some people" when he came through Berlin on September 1.⁷⁹

Within a week of returning to RUP headquarters in Paris that September, Bill prepared to go to Portugal for work in connection with the Portuguese Peace Campaign. Portugal at the time was under authoritarian control and Bill would not have been welcomed except for his diplomatic passport; he lost this soon after and does not appear to have traveled to any more fascist countries for the RUP. Martha recalled later that Bill also visited Spain during the Civil War and went to the British Parliament to see Anthony Eden. RUP work took Bill throughout Europe and to the United States several times between 1935 and 1937.

Through Bill, Martha came to know well the RUP's leaders, Louis Dolivet, Otto Katz, and Pierre Cot. Her association with these Front officials, each a Soviet agent, represents yet another important aspect of Martha's German years not discussed in Through Embassy Eyes. Bill's anti-fascist work in the campaign receives only the most cursory notice in her memoir, a justifiable exclusion, given that Martha wrote it on the eve of war in Europe.

By early 1937, Bill had left the Peace Campaign to work for its affiliate, the American League Against War and Fascism. He remained associated with this front through the institution of the Nazi Soviet pact in August 1939. Soon after the pact was announced, the organization abruptly changed its name to the League for Peace

⁷⁹ Letter, Bill to Martha, 9/13/1936, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

and Democracy.⁸⁰ At the time, Bill was running the League's Spanish Children's Fund, collecting food and clothing to send to Spain and by the fall he was also in charge of Chinese relief. His continued support for the organization was indicative of the strength of his acceptance of the Soviet interpretation of world events.

For a time, Martha considered working for the RUP alongside her brother but by early 1937, had decided against it. Her commitment to Soviet intelligence took precedence. Sensing that her father's ambassadorship was to end soon, Martha traveled to Moscow to meet with her superiors at NKVD headquarters, the Center, about her future. On her way to Moscow, she stopped in Warsaw to see Boris. Earlier that year she had been very worried about Winogradow. She had heard a rumor that he had been arrested. Her fears, though, were allayed by a January 29, 1937 letter from him about his assignment in Poland. She responded with undiminished zeal for reuniting with him and permission was granted for her to see Boris that March.⁸¹

As she finished her trip from Warsaw to Moscow, Boris's report preceded her to the Center. Martha wished to work in the United States after her father's retirement and had made contact with Earl Browder in the United States on a visit home the previous winter. Through Bill, as seen above, she had become "close friends" with Otto Katz and Louis Dolivet and they had asked her to work with them in Europe; Browder, too, wanted

⁸⁰ The two were the same organization. The League changed its name and radically altered its interpretation of the foreseeable European war when Stalin and Hitler struck a non-aggression pact, 24 August 1939. The Nazi-Soviet pact cost most organizations that altered their stance to accommodate the new Soviet line. This included not only the League but the Communist Party of the United States of America [CPUSA] as well. The RUP folded the day after the announcement of the Nazi-Soviet pact was made [Thierry Wolton, *Le KGB en France* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1986), p.210].

⁸¹ Weinstein and Vassiliev, *The Haunted Wood*, p.55.

her services. Winogradow argued that "an authoritative comrade must talk to her and convince her to stay in Europe and work only for us."⁸² It is not clear from the information given to Weinstein how much the Soviet's valued the information Martha had passed on from her years at the U.S. Embassy in Germany. Given her access to her father's work and thought, this may have been valuable, but it appears that the NKVD thought Martha did not have as much promise as a source of intelligence in the United States.

In Moscow, Martha met with the head of the NKVD's Foreign Department, Abram Slutsky. He trumped the other job offers, and Martha agreed to return to the United States to work for the Soviets in her homeland. As was customary in such meetings between agent and Center, Martha wrote a comprehensive narrative of her life with especial concentration on her ideological development and service to the Soviet Union and detailed her future usefulness as a Soviet agent.⁸³

In that narrative, Martha wrote about how she had access to her father's correspondence, the embassy staff, and journalists in Germany. Even so, she continued, her family was treated "suspiciously, unfriendly, and (as far as the Germans are concerned) insultingly." Her father's isolated position meant she would produce little of use to the Soviets if she stayed in Germany. In America, though, she was "suspected of nothing" and had many valuable contacts she could mine for the Soviets. Because her efforts to keep her father longer in Berlin would not succeed, perhaps, she suggested, she could press her father to "arrange his resignation with a provocation." "He could be

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., p.56.

convinced to do it," she felt, "if it had significance for the USSR."⁸⁴ Further, because her father had some influence with Roosevelt and Cordell Hull, both of whom, she felt were "inclined to be slightly anti-fascist," she wanted to know whom the Soviets might suggest as a replacement for her father. If the man had a slight chance of appointment as ambassador, Martha vowed, she would importune her father to support him.⁸⁵ There is no evidence in Weinstein's narrative, or any other source for that matter, suggesting that either Ambassador Dodd or his wife knew of Martha's connections to the NKVD.

Slutsky passed Martha's report and his evaluation to his superior, Nikolay Yezhov, who forwarded it to Stalin for a decision. According to Weinstein, there is no evidence of what Stalin's reply was, if he made one.⁸⁶ Although details of the discussion about Martha are not known, it is clear that her service was troubling to Yezhov. Stalin's purges were in full swing at the time and it was not long before the entire Berlin Embassy was to be called before his "courts." Bucking the decision on Martha to Stalin suggests self-protection as much as a commentary on Martha's potential as an agent.⁸⁷ Stalin must have agreed to accept her offer of aid, as the NKVD set up a series of protocols for its agents to meet Martha in America.

Unbeknownst to Martha, the NKVD began to play an anti-matchmaking game as it effectively separated Martha from Winogradow while allowing her to believe that the

⁸⁴ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, pp.55-58. There is no evidence that Dodd would have consciously staged his exit for the benefit of the Soviet line.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.56,

⁸⁷ Weinstein suggests that passing the decision onto Stalin indicated the Soviet's estimation of Martha's value [Ibid., p.57].

two might still be married. The Center ordered that all correspondence between Martha and Winogradow was to be routed through the NKVD, which would then reply to her letters. She was told to avoid Communist connections, prolong her father's stay in Berlin, consider possible replacements that she thought appropriate, and arrange a provocation for when her father did retire. All the while she was to continue reporting summaries of documents from the embassy archives to her "case officer" for forwarding to Moscow.⁸⁸

Winogradow, learning the details of Martha's meetings with Slutsky, grew concerned over how much the NKVD had promised her in relation to him. Apparently, Martha had been encouraged to believe that after the six-month period of no contact the Center might allow her to marry Winogradow. Worried, Boris wrote: "She may produce a bill that neither you nor I is going to pay. Isn't it better to soften slightly the explicitness of your promises if you really gave them to her?" At the time, Boris was married. While he had been stationed in Berlin, his wife and child had been in Moscow.⁸⁹ Apparently, he was involved with another woman, besides Martha, for the NKVD as well. In one letter Weinstein and Vassiliev quote, Winogradow referred to Martha as Juliet #1; the identity of Juliet #2 is unknown.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp.57-58.

⁸⁹ Armand Berard, *Un Ambassadeur Se Souvient: Au Temps du Danger en Allemand* (Paris, 1974). Shareen Brysac notes that Martha mentioned Boris's daughter in "Bright Journey Into Darkness," a draft chapter for an unidentified book in the Martha Dodd Papers, LOC [*Resisting Hitler*, n.72, p.426]. In that essay, which describes the period between 9/1934 and 12/1934, Martha noted that Boris had told her that he was separated from his wife.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.58. Juliet #2 may have been Brigitte Helm, a German actress known for her statuesque performance in Fritz Lang's silent film, *Metropolis*. Martha noted that Boris dated her in some of her correspondence.

Even as Martha prepared to leave Germany, she still pursued Boris. Boris, for his part, complained to the Center again in November 1937. He wrote that it was "not unknown to [the NKVD], that journalist Louis Fischer had proposed to her and she did not accept in the hopes of marrying Boris."⁹¹ He thought the NKVD should tell her once-and-for-all that they could not marry. Martha, then, would accept Fischer's proposal.⁹² Boris reasoned that because Martha agreed to work for the NKVD, whether she were to marry him or not, there was no reason to think she would quit out of disappointment over losing Boris.

The Center, apparently, agreed with Boris, but allowed Martha to say goodbye to Boris, allowing him to travel to Berlin in December just before she left. This was the last time Martha ever saw Winogradow. Nazi papers reported that "while he was in Berlin the Soviet Secret Police had raided the Soviet Embassy [in Warsaw and, Martha supposed, Boris' office] and found incriminating documents." She returned to the United States; he was recalled to Moscow in January 1938.

That spring Boris was executed for collaborating with the Nazis. Martha, for a long time, thought that he had been compromised because he left the embassy without a leader. The Soviet ambassador to Poland had been recalled to Moscow and quickly executed. Boris was in charge of the embassy when he went to Berlin to say goodbye.

⁹¹ There is no confirmation of this proposal in Martha's papers, although she did have at least one earlier relationship with Fischer.

⁹² On Fischer and his political bent, see Stephen Koch, Double Lives (New York: The Free Press, 1994), pp.286 and 384, n.73. Fischer, editor of The Nation and a staunch fellow traveler at the time, was involved in many of the organizations that Munzenberg set up. He was replaced in 1939 by Alvaro Del Vayo, another Stern friend. Fischer faced his "Kronstadt" over the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the start of World War II and subsequently described it in Crossman, The God That Failed.

Martha blamed their relationship for his death for many years, reasoning that "to a suspicious mind" Boris' relationship with the daughter of a foreign ambassador might have destroyed him.⁹³ He was rehabilitated in 1957, i.e. he was no longer listed as a traitor to the USSR and, in a sense, the charges that he collaborated with the Nazis were posthumously dropped.

Just before leaving Berlin, Martha also said goodbye to another doomed friend, Mildred. Martha and Mildred had reduced their contacts with one another since Thomas Wolfe's 1935 visit. Even so, Martha was knowledgeable about, if not involved in, much that the Harnacks did. Martha hid these connections from most people after she left Germany. To Max Delbruck, she wrote: "[the Harnacks] avoided us from the mid-thirties on." To Ledig-Rowohlt she suggested that Boris told her that she shouldn't see the Harnacks much, "which [she] didn't, except in the first couple of years." The reason, she suggested, was due to an animus Boris and Arvid shared which was evidenced by a fight the two had on the trip to see Fallada. Finally, to writer Shareen Brysac, she said that her contact with Mildred had "ceased at [Mildred's] request in the early 30's."⁹⁴

These claims are at best misleading; the one made to Brysac was false. Each suggests that Mildred completely broke off contact with Martha and her family in

⁹³ Letter, Martha Dodd to Ilya Ehrenburg, 10/29/1957, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁹⁴ Letter, Martha Dodd to Max Delbruck, Martha Dodd Papers. Max Delbruck, a Nobel prize winning biologist, was a long-time friend of Martha's and a friend and relative of Arvid Harnack [Letter, MD to Betty [Mrs. Erzsi Valyi], 6/27/1979, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC]. Letter, Martha Dodd to Heinz Ledig-Rowohlt, /19/1975, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. Letter, Martha Dodd to Shareen Brysac, 6/5/1989, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

mid-1935, at the latest; to Brysac, Martha seems to make a claim of an even earlier break. Mildred maintained contact with Martha and her family, nevertheless, throughout the Dodd family's stay in Germany; not surprisingly, this contact was less frequent between spring 1935 and December 1937, but their contacts did not cease, even after the NKVD recruited the Harnacks. Arnold Molutski, a German who took English lessons from Mildred, told the FBI in 1957 that he had been introduced to Martha by Mildred at the US Embassy in 1936.⁹⁵ Mildred also corresponded with the Dodd family during 1936 and 1937; Martha remembered Mildred mailing her postcards when she traveled out of the country. In a 1937 letter to Ambassador Dodd, Mildred requested letters of recommendation to the presidents of U.S. colleges. She hoped to lecture in the United States when she visited there during the winter of 1937.⁹⁶

Even stronger evidence of continued contact comes from Martha's NKVD file. Weinstein has quoted a January 1936 NKVD report from Bukhartsev that "Her teacher is Arvid Harnack to whom she goes often."⁹⁷ Martha reminisced to ex-intelligence friends about her relationship with Arvid too. She remembered an argument that she had with him. "[Arvid] did not like what Stalinism was doing to

⁹⁵ Memo, SAC New York, to Director, FBI, 6/7/1957, Alfred K. Stern, et. al, 100-57453-1779.

⁹⁶ It is not known if Martha and Mildred met in the United States during their travel at this time.

⁹⁷ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, p.53. Martha also disguised her contacts with Arvid. In a letter from Martha to a Mr. Frucht [10/19/1982, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC], she wrote: "I did not know Arvid very well." Arvid's role in educating Martha suggests otherwise.

everyone, everywhere. He spoke vehemently to [Martha], and had agonizing doubts about the truth of the propaganda emanating from [Stalin]....⁹⁸" The two appear to have been arguing.

This illustrates two things. First, Arvid may have been a doctrinaire Communist, but he was not a doctrinaire Stalinist. Second, it was in argument with Martha that Arvid became vehement against Stalin's cult of personality; one may infer that Martha took the opposite side of the argument. Arvid did not defend the latest turn the train of history had taken, but argued that Stalin corrupted the truth of Communism. Martha defended Stalinism. By the time she wrote the letter quoted here, i.e. 1979, her position had moved towards that of Arvid. She told her friend, Greta Kuckhoff: "I think there should be loads of ideological controversies within the socialist countries and movement."⁹⁹

Mildred and Martha also met together from time to time, taking proper precautions to avoid surveillance. Through their contact, Mildred informed Martha of her activities to such an extent that Martha was fully aware of the Harnacks' espionage. Evidence of this is derived from Martha's description of her final meeting with Mildred:

The last time I saw her was at a busy restaurant in a park. We found an inconspicuous table and talked quietly for an hour, about books, ourselves, fascism and the future. ...Quietly she related that she and Arvid had succeeded in influencing and bringing into the underground many intellectuals, writers and professionals, the only groups with whom

⁹⁸ Letter, Martha Dodd to Greta [Kuckhoff], cc. to Max Delbruck, 6/19/1979, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁹⁹ Letter, Martha Dodd to Greta Kuckhoff, 6/19/1979, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

they could have close contacts (through their own relatives they reached into diplomacy and the army).¹⁰⁰

This meeting in a park in winter was to be the last between the two friends. Martha left Germany in December of 1937 and did not return until after the Cold War had begun.

In August 1942, the German Army High Command broke a coded message sent by a *Kappelle* radio operator and began to unravel the spy ring. The message contained the names of Harro Schulze-Boysen and Adam Kuckhoff. The Germans also turned a Soviet sent to help the Berlin *Kapelle* when he parachuted into Germany in August of 1942. These two events enabled the Nazis to break the Soviet spy rings throughout Germany and much of occupied Europe. Between August 31, 1942 and March 1943 over one hundred members of the various branches of the Rote Kapelle were arrested. The Germans executed forty-eight of them. Adam Kuckhoff and Arvid Harnack were hanged in December of 1942; Mildred was beheaded in February the following year.¹⁰¹

By the time Martha learned of this, she had been in the United States for five years doing all that she could to oppose Hitler and support the Soviet Union, both publicly and clandestinely. Chapter 3 tells how Martha, together with her father, brother and new husband, Alfred Stern, worked to warn America of the menace Hitler posed. It also describes Martha's connections to Soviet intelligence and the activities

¹⁰⁰ This is from the 1947/48 reminiscence, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC so the possibility exists that Martha's remembrance was tainted by *ex post facto* knowledge.

¹⁰¹ Wolfgang Benz and Walter H. Pehle, ed., Lance W. Garmer, trans., Encyclopedia of German Resistance to the Nazi Movement, (New York: Continuum, 1997), pp.223-226.

she engaged in on behalf of the Soviet Union. Martha followed the example of Mildred as she could, wearing her anti-fascism as a badge of honor, and hiding her commitment to the USSR behind her appropriation of her father's legacy as a democrat and Progressive.

Chapter 3

Radical Chic and the NKVD, 1937 to 1938

Life in Nazi Germany forged Martha's commitment to the utopian vision promulgated by the Soviet Union as the seeds planted by Lovett and Sandburg grew into a dogmatic faith in the hope offered by Stalin. Her loves and friendships taught her much about espionage and subterfuge, and Martha gained practical experience in fighting for her hopes through these means. Martha took these lessons home to America. Her epiphany showed her homeland to her in a new light and she reacted accordingly. Bill joined her in these activities, as did the man she married only months after her return, Alfred Stern. This chapter analyzes the emergence of Martha's conversion in her activities, both public and clandestine, and the circumstantial evidence of how her faith remained steady through the Nazi-Soviet Pact [1939 to 1941] that caused so many other fellow-travelers and Communists to face their "Kronstadt," Louis Fischer's term for a communist's loss of faith in the USSR.

Martha returned to the United States from Nazi Germany in 1938 a devoted anti-fascist, a committed communist (though not a party member). She was also a Soviet agent. She had developed further than even her old mentor Carl Sandburg might have thought. In fact, in November 1940, two years after her return, she called him to task for not being "progressive" enough:

Honesty and simple human virtues seem to have, ironically enough, lost their meaning to a man who has devoted a large part of his life to the study of Abraham Lincoln. A man who resides on Mt. Olympus, I suppose, considers himself above the struggle It is sad to me that during the last two years I have had to revise many opinions I had held about you. You seem to have lost touch with the people upon whose hopes, needs and backs, literally, you arose. Without those people, the blood and marrow of your poetry, your greatness cannot be real. They are being betrayed. Surely you cannot stand by and applaud. If I were naïve, I would expect an apologia. Not being naïve, I expect your continued silence.

The student had surpassed her mentor.¹

Germany changed more than just Martha. It rearranged the dynamic that shaped the Dodd family's activity and commitment. In his final year as Ambassador, Dodd began to follow his children's lead in finding forums to speak against the fascist menace. The children, in effect, became the leaders of the family. This is apparent even during the last months of Dodd's ambassadorship; he became enmeshed in his children's political commitments. In a September 23, 1937 letter to Bill, Dodd agreed to speak at an event for the American League Against War and Fascism. Dodd wrote: "Will accept invitation. Use this to invite others."² Word of the engagement made it as far as Berlin and the Nazis pounced. Ambassador Dodd was forced to amend his plans:

Back from North Carolina; can't go to NYC. Confidential letter from the Department said that the German Embassy would ask for my recall if I

¹ Letter, Martha Dodd to Sandburg, 11/13/1940, CSC; quoted in North Callahan, Carl Sandburg: His Life and Works (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), p.175. Callahan suggested that Martha was calling Sandburg to task for not supplying a blurb for a book she was writing. This would have been Ambassador Dodd's Diary, published the following year. I find this explanation possible but incomplete. The reason, apparent from the quote, as to why Martha criticized Sandburg had to do with his support for the war in Europe against Hitler. For Communists, at this time, the war was simply a conflict between capitalists and so neutrality was the position of the day. Sandburg disagreed.

² Letter, William Dodd, Sr. to William Dodd, Jr., 9/1937, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC.

spoke Saturday. You see what New York would mean especially since the President wants me to remain in Berlin for the next 3 or 4 months.³

By this time, what remaining support Dodd had in the State Department had dwindled. Newly promoted Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles actively sought to undermine Dodd's authority. While Dodd was vacationing in the U.S. and meeting with the President and other superiors during September and October of 1937, Welles ordered an Embassy official to attend the Nazi Party Rally at Nuremberg in early September.⁴ Dodd had pointedly avoided these rallies. He argued that to attend a rally for one party and not others would show that the U.S. accepted the existence of single party rule in Germany, an anathema to a democratic people.⁵ By the time Dodd learned of it, the betrayal had become *fait accompli*. His letter of protest to the State Department was leaked to the press and the German government took the opportunity to make it abundantly clear that they would welcome a new ambassador.⁶

³ Letter, William Dodd, Sr. to William Dodd, Jr., 9/29/1937, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴ Dodd, as noted, was not favored by most career employees at State. He lost what congressional support he may have had before that summer when he publicly supporting Roosevelt's Court Packing Plan. Sumner Welles's elevation over Dodd's friend Moore, an experienced diplomat, was the critical blow to Dodd's ability to stay longer in Germany. Fred Arthur Bailey's William Edward Dodd: The South's Yeoman Scholar (University Press of Virginia; Charlottesville, 1997), pp183-185.

⁵ The major embassies all refused to send delegates, until the U.S. action ended this joint protest and the other embassies attended the rally as well.

⁶ Bailey, William Edward Dodd, pp.183-185; Robert Dallek's Democrat and Diplomat: The Life of William E. Dodd (Oxford University Press; New York, 1968), pp.312-315. Both authors well handle the intricacies of Dodd's alienation of the Senate, the State Department, and other power centers. Neither, though, notes the interesting personal drama in the Dodd family intertwined in the story of Dodd's last months as ambassador that is detailed here.

Even before his return, it was clear that Professor Dodd's tenure was at an end. He and Roosevelt had agreed that Dodd would retire in the near future, as the letter quoted above indicates. The decision was not one-sided; Dodd fervently wished to get back to his "History of the South," and only wanted to stay as ambassador long enough to influence the choice of a like-minded internationalist and anti-fascist. He wanted to leave on his own terms and avoid the appearance that the Nazis had forced him out of Germany. He met with Roosevelt on October 19, 1937, just before returning to Germany, and left believing that Roosevelt was sympathetic to his desire. He returned to Berlin expecting to stay through February or March of 1938.⁷

This was not to be. Almost immediately after Dodd returned to his Embassy, Secretary Hull cabled him to return by the end of the year. The November 23 order stunned the Dodds. Martha Johns blamed Bill:

I am sorry that you got him into 'your affairs.' You should not have taken advantage of his ignorance of the situation and of his naivete. All this added to the other unfortunate incident, placed him in an almost impossible position here and injures greatly his prestige as a diplomat.

She excoriated his employers:

[The anti-fascist movement has] used your father's position to advance their ends, and he, even has to help you [by supplementing your paycheck] because they will not pay you enough to live on decently."

⁷ Dallek takes Roosevelt's reported sympathy for Dodd's position at face value more than Bailey does. Bailey, overall, more aptly reads the character and drives of those involved in this saga so I follow him in thinking that Dodd overestimated Roosevelt's support for him at this stage in his tenure. Dallek, Democrat and Diplomat; Bailey, William Edward Dodd.

In spite of Bill's mess, Martha Johns hoped her husband might lecture at some of the New York universities if the right approach was made, "but not through your organization," she berated her son.⁸

Ignoring their mother's ire, Martha and Bill continued to arrange speaking engagements for their father after his return to the States. Martha even offered to get her father's speeches and articles published for "twice the price you would otherwise get."⁹ The ambassador's children also used their father's connections to solicit funds for their causes and to seek allies in and out of the government. They used their father's name and reputation as a badge of honor to highlight their cause and to lend it his *gravitas*. Returning home in January 1938, Ambassador Dodd continued his campaign of anti-fascist agitation often led by his daughter and son.

Perhaps Martha Johns could have intervened and removed her husband from his involvement in his children's commitments. She had not been entirely pleased with her children's politics and she was even less pleased that they had drawn their father into any association with the work of the groups they supported. Her concerns, though, would not be heard. Mrs. Dodd's health had been poor for years and the stress of life in Germany only made matters worse. She suffered a fatal heart attack on May 28, 1938, less than six months after they had returned from Germany.¹⁰

⁸ Letter, Martha Johns Dodd to William Dodd, Jr., 29 November 1937, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁹ Letter, 8/1938, Martha to "Dad," Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

¹⁰ Martha returned several weeks earlier than her parents, arriving in New York on December 22, 1937, her parents on January 8, 1938.

Facing his grief through work, Ambassador Dodd threw himself into an extended series of lectures and appearances. He lectured groups of "interesting ladies in Leesburg," joined in rallies against Japanese aggression, and showed up at any other anti-fascist forum he or his children could find. Many, if not most, of these were related more or less closely to the Popular Front movement, a creation inspired by Soviet intelligence. Groups Dodd lectured included: the Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations, the Massachusetts League of Women's Voters, the Church League for Industrial Democracy, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, the Zionist Organizations of America, and the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy

Martha, of course, shared her father's commitment and made an equally strong effort to wage war against fascism. Martha, though, had a second commitment that subsumed the first. Upon returning the United States in December 1937, Martha settled in New York City. In early 1938 Martha met with a Soviet contact code-named, IGOR. She passed to him a letter from Claude Bowers, Ambassador to Spain, and old Dodd family friend, concerning the political situation in Spain. The NKVD was pleased that Martha was still working with them in spite of the problems over her relationship with Winogradow. The Soviets pressed her to deepen her connections to State Department officials so as to glean information from them and to evaluate new prospects for future recruits by the NKVD.¹¹

¹¹ On IGOR see Allen Weinstein and Alexei Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America (New York: Random House, 1999), pp.60-61. IGOR is not identified by Weinstein, suggesting his Soviet sources did not provide that information.

Alfred Kaufman Stern

Martha's social life also changed as she married Alfred Kaufman Stern, a wealthy investor. Alfred Kaufman Stern's life before his marriage may be sketched quickly. Stern was born to Fannie Kaufman and Max Stern in North Dakota on November 29, 1897. His parents were German, Jewish pioneers who settled in Fargo at the end of 1800's. His father was a wealthy, banker and landowner. A privileged youth, as a teenager, Alfred journeyed east for his education. He attended the prestigious prep school Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire. Apparently he performed adequately as a student and earned Senior Honors Grades in History and Physics. He also participated in the Western Club and the French Club as extracurricular activities; Alfred knew some German having grown up with immigrant parents.¹² From Phillips Exeter, Alfred went on to Harvard where he completed his first year before entering the Army in 1918. He served in Europe and returned a Second Lieutenant. Harvard awarded him a GI diploma as a graduate of the class of 1921. Alfred returned to the family business in Fargo and managed the Dakota Trust and Savings Bank for several months. Unhappy with banking, Alfred moved from Fargo to Chicago in 1919 and found a job in the General American Tank Corporation.¹³

Stern took a position at Sears, Roebuck and Company and quickly advanced by marrying into the family. On October 26, 1921, Alfred wed Marion Rosenwald, the daughter of Sears' owner, Julius Rosenwald. In 1925, Alfred's father-in-law appointed

¹² The Exonian, Phillips Exeter Academy, Wednesday, May 10, 1916, vol.CXV, no.7.

¹³ The information about Alfred's activities and performance at Phillips Exeter Academy were supplied to Dr. Douglas Wheeler by the Phillips Exeter Academy Library; copies in possession of the author.

him director of his philanthropy, the Julius Rosenwald Foundation. The Foundation supported many works aimed at improving the lives of African Americans, especially education and public health initiatives. Julius Rosenwald had supported the cause of minority education along the model of Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute. Alfred was closely involved in these efforts for more than a decade.

As director of the Rosenwald Foundation, Stern developed two strong interests.¹⁴ Through his work on the Michigan Boulevard Garden Apartments in Chicago, a project aimed to provide low cost apartments to the poor through a mix of private charity and for-profit business, Stern became a recognized expert on public housing. He served as President of the corporation between 1932 and 1939. Stern oversaw the project and took a strong lesson from its failure to fulfill expectations: private capital could not profitably run low-income housing; therefore, low-income housing had to be government built and run.

Stern's interest in public housing was recognized in Illinois and in Washington. President Hoover appointed Stern to his Conference on Home Building and Ownership in 1931. While on the committee Stern served as Chairman of the Large Scale Operations Committee from 1931 to 1932. After Hoover's defeat, Stern served the Roosevelt Administration as a consultant to the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration from 1933 to 1937. He also served as chairman of the Illinois State Housing Commission from 1933-37 and the Vice President of the National Association of Housing Officials from 1933 until 1936. Harold Ickes invited Stern to participate in a conference sponsored by the U.S. Housing Authority in 1937. Stern's comments on the

¹⁴ Harvard Class of 1921, Twenty-fifth Anniversary Report, Cambridge, Printed for the Class, 1946.

issue of housing could be found in The New York Times, The Washington D.C. Times, and The Chicago Tribune. Public Housing was a passion Stern embraced even through his years in exile where he advised the Czechs, the Cubans, and the Chinese on the construction of large-scale public housing projects.¹⁵

The second great interest of Alfred's life before marrying Martha was civil rights. Stern became a staunch advocate for the improvement of the lives of African Americans. His work introduced him to many African American leaders throughout the country including A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Chicago Alderman Earl Dickerson, and Robert Weaver of the Public Works Administration. Alfred claimed that "as director of the Rosenwald Fund in the thirties, he helped to build hundreds of elementary schools in the South and high schools as well as colleges for Blacks."¹⁶

His pride was justified. In a 1936 report, "How the fund has dealt with Negro Welfare," Stern outlined the many significant efforts the Foundation made to improve the lives of African Americans:

1) Health

- 17 Negro hospitals and clinics
- conducted syphilis control demonstrations in 6 southern states
- contributed to salaries of Negro public health nurses and to institutes for Negro physicians
- Financed study of tuberculosis among Negroes in Tennessee.
- Studies on cost of medical care and how to lower costs

2) Education

¹⁵ Scrapbook, Clipping from the NY Bronx Home News, 6/3/1938, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

¹⁶ Letter, undated draft, Alfred and Martha Stern to President Carter. Copy in possession of the author courtesy of Lilinka Sperlova, former secretary of the Sterns in Prague.

- construction of rural schools
- teachers' homes
- shops
- industrial high schools
- provision of shop equipment, building plans, school buses, shop work supervisors and libraries
- studies of rural Negro schools
- fellowships
- grants to four Negro university centers
- contributions to summer institutes for Negro teachers, preachers and agricultural extension agents

3) Race relations

- fellowships in social studies for southern whites
- contributions to the study of race and culture at the University of Hawaii
- establishment of a department of Negro life and schools at George Peabody College for Teachers
- study of Negro life and education by Dr. Schrieke
- grants to the Commission on Interracial Cooperation
- study of Mexican Schools

4) Economic status.

- Efforts of Foreman, Akridge, Weaver, and Peter to influence federal and local agencies to give Negro his fair share.
- Number of other miscellaneous programs including contributions to New School, etc.¹⁷

Alfred could justly claim a large share of the credit for this work because he was at the forefront the philanthropy's activity. In his statement to his Harvard class, he reminisced that he had "traveled all over the United States and learned to know the problems of the underprivileged and the struggles of minorities in this country."¹⁸

¹⁷ "A Memorandum on the Julius Rosenwald Fund Review of Activities," 8 May 1936, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC, formatting has been adjusted for clarity.

¹⁸ Twenty-fifth Anniversary Report, Harvard Class of 1921 (Cambridge, MA: Printed for the Class, 1946).

Although Alfred would pursue his interests in public housing and civil rights for the rest of his life, they were not his only interests. He became passionately devoted to Freudian analysis after undergoing psychoanalysis in the early 1930's. He emerged as a devotee of this approach to psychiatric treatment and became a generous supporter of research into the application of Freud's theories. Stern and several others began the Institute for Psychoanalysis of Chicago, and he served as president of the Institute from 1933 to 1937. The Institute's biggest coup while Alfred was president was in convincing noted German Freudian, Dr. Karen Horney, to come to Chicago and take up residence at the Institute.¹⁹ Alfred most valued the Institute's work in the area of scientific research in psychosomatic medicine and in the training of competent psychiatrists. Besides these central interests, Stern was involved in a number of other causes and organizations before he met Martha. These included the founding of the Chicago and North Western Railroad, a concern he directed for two years, serving on the Board of Jewish Charities of Chicago, and founding the First Federal Savings Bank of Chicago.

The work of which he was proudest, though, was his involvement in the anti-Nazi resistance. In 1946, Alfred wrote his Harvard class that:

In the early years of Hitler's regime I gave and raised money for an anti-Nazi underground organization in Germany. I participated in every way I could in anti-Nazi work.²⁰

Several sources corroborate Alfred's claim, but they shed little light on the details of his involvement. In Martha's last reminiscence about Mildred, she implied that Alfred was

¹⁹ On Horney's life and career see Susan Quinn's A Mind of Her Own: The Life of Karen Horney (New York: Summit Books, 1987).

²⁰ Statement of Alfred Stern, Harvard Class of 1921, Twenty-fifth Anniversary Report, Cambridge, Printed for the Class, 1946.

involved in the underground. One FBI informant said that Stern "became deeply concerned over the oppression of Jews by Hitler and supported anti-Nazi work in Germany for several years."²¹ Another informant, or perhaps the same one, reported that Stern was acquainted with "one of the Liberal Jews who felt very strongly that something drastic had to be done then (1937) to check Hitler's drive and who had assisted STERN [to] raise money for underground work in Germany."²²

The underground movement in which Alfred was involved was *Freies Deutschland*, the Free Germany Movement.²³ This organization, which was run by Soviet agent Otto Katz, may have been related to Willi Munzenberg's "Free Germany" radio station for which Martha's Friend, Jurgen Kuczynski raised money.²⁴ Many of the Germans involved in Free Germany went on to positions in the East German government after World War II.²⁵ Alfred was also connected with the anti-Nazi resistance group *Neu*

²¹ The context of the quotation in the file suggests that the informant was not a person, but form of electronic coverage, microphone, wiretap, or trash cover(i.e. checking a suspect's garbage for evidence).

²² FBI Report, New York, 1/6/1945, 100-57453-6, p.10 and 11. A second person was said to have been associated with Stern. This unidentified individual was said to be "a very important figure in Jewish philanthropic affairs, and a conservative Jew with strong anti-Nazi feelings."

²³ FBI Report, Report, New York, 1/6/45, 100-57453-6, pp.3, 10-11.

²⁴ Ruth Werner, *Sonja's Report* (Berlin: Verlag, Neues Leben, 1980), p.27, says that Juergen Kuczynski raised 100, 000 marks for Willi Muenzenberg's Free Germany radio station.

²⁵ Wolfgang Benz and Walter Pehle, trans. Lance W. Garner, *The Encyclopedia of German Resistance to the Nazi Movement* (New York: Continuum, 1997), pp.210-212; Werner, *Sonja's Report*.

Beginnen, perhaps related also to the *Freies Deutschland* organization.²⁶ Between July and August of 1937, Alfred traveled to England, France, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and Germany, Austria, and Italy; the last three countries were increasingly dangerous places for a Jewish man to travel in 1937.²⁷ These trips coincide with the time when Alfred raised money for anti-Nazi activities.

Whether Alfred met Martha while in Germany is not known, but he did make several contacts in the Popular Front Movement and to persons involved in Soviet espionage. These included Otto Katz who is discussed in Chapter 5, an unknown woman who Stern knew in connection with the underground and who was later connected to him by the FBI in its ALTO case (see Chapter 5), and Paul Hagen. Hagen was a close friend and associate of Comintern official, Gerhart Eisler, and the head of "a left-socialist group called New Beginning." It advocated a popular front with Communists and raised money in Europe and America. In May of 1937, Hagen met Alfred Stern, who helped him raise money for his efforts.²⁸

Alfred settled in New York City after returning from Europe in the summer of 1937; he appears to have moved there prior to leaving for Europe. His wife, Marion

²⁶ Report, New York, 5/18/1955, 100-57453-1060, p.41. Romerstein and Breindel note that *Neu Beginnen* was a left-socialist group infiltrated by the German Communist Party. Its primary organizer was Paul Hagen who, Romerstein and Breindel report, counted Alfred Stern as a wealthy benefactor [Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel, The Venona Secrets: Exposing Soviet Espionage and America's Traitors (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2000), pp.170, 171].

²⁷ Airtel, New York to the Director, 1/20/1954, 100-57453-966. The information comes from Alfred's passport which was examined by FBI agents courtesy of the State Department.

²⁸ Romerstein and Breindel, The Venona Secrets, pp.170-171. Romerstein reports that Hagen referred to Stern by the code name, "Stone."

Rosenwald, sued him for divorce on a charge of abandonment and won on September 1, 1937. Rumor had it that Alfred received a million-dollar settlement in the divorce in order to get rid of him; evidence in the FBI files suggests there may have been some truth to the rumor.²⁹ Stern's wealth may also have come from the inheritance he received at his father's death as well as whatever capital he accumulated from his connections to the Rosenberg family.³⁰ Either way, by the time Alfred moved to New York, he was independently wealthy and occupied himself in the management of his significant investment portfolio to support himself.

Alfred's political position was changing too at this time. His involvement in the anti-fascist resistance brought him into contact with a number of communists and fellow travelers. Clearly he was moving towards the far-left politically even before he met Martha. Alfred's family was Republican and anticommunist and Alfred appears to have followed his parents' lead for a time.³¹ His activities in the 1930's, especially those dealing with race issues and subsidized housing moved him into either the New Deal

²⁹ Agents reported that Leonard Moos Rieser, an attorney who had known Alfred in Chicago in the 1930's said that Alfred's wife, Marion, was "most generous, giving a large sum of money to Alfred" in the divorce settlement [FBI Report, Chicago, 6/4/1957, 100-57453-1763]. A later report suggests that this was not really a settlement but a redistribution of family insurance policies between Alfred and Marion [FBI Report, New York 8/20/1957, 100-57453-1992, p.30].

³⁰ Stern later sued his sister, Ada Greenbaum, because he had been substantially cut out of his mother's will. His parents detested Communism and his mother was critical of his political activism. In her last years she lived with her daughter. Stern argued that his sister exerted undue influence in pressing his mother to disinherit him. The suit was settled in 1955 for a sum of \$10,000.

³¹ The strength of his family's political position may be gauged by events that occurred in the mid-1950's. His mother effectively disinherited Alfred on account of his political activism. See chapter 7 for a brief discussion of this incident in the context of the Sterns' residency in Mexico. FBI Report, New York, 9/20/1957, 100-57453-1992.

camp or that of Progressive Republicans like the La Follettes, left of the political center but not far left. Upon moving to New York City during the summer of 1937, Alfred made the acquaintance and then friendship of nominal Republican Vito Marcantonio.

Several people who knew Alfred before his marriage to Martha suggested to the FBI that Alfred's politics became radical after his marriage.³² This does not appear to have been true as Alfred's long-time friendship with fellow traveler and congressman, Vito Marcantonio suggests. It is not clear whether Marcantonio influenced Alfred's political development, but their friendship and long political relationship suggests that Alfred was clearly moving towards the radical left by the time he married Martha.

Alfred also sought to insert himself in the field of public housing in New York City and, through Marcantonio, he soon obtained an appointment as the chairman of New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia's Committee on Property Improvement. Alfred discussed his committee's goals over radio station WHN . He argued that action not words was most needed. The committee urged "owners of real estate ...to take full advantage" of the laws Congress had passed, primarily those sponsored by Senator Robert Wagner with whom Alfred worked closely on a number of housing issues. Alfred advocated use of a recently passed "Prior Lien Law" that allowed cities to renovate old-law tenements and thereby force compliance with the "Multiple Dwelling Law." The courts had halted the execution of the law at the time, but Alfred was sure this would only be a temporary setback.³³

³² FBI Report, Chicago, 6/4/1957, 100-57453-1763.

³³ The National Housing Act of 1934 provided subsidized loans that enabled middle-class people to build new homes or purchase existing ones but it did nothing to help low income persons find residences. NY Senator Wagner sponsored a 1938 bill that made loans available for the construction of low-income housing, amendments curtailed

The question that most interested him, he continued, was the problem of housing for low-income groups. Slums must be destroyed and better housing built. The government, he argued, must take an active role in doing this. Private enterprise, Alfred argued, could not build low-income housing on a profitable basis and the resources of a city were insufficient for the job to be done at that level.³⁴

Within a year, Alfred had given up on his committee. It was "on the wrong track," he told the press.³⁵ After resigning, he sought a more influential position from LaGuardia. In September 1939, Marcantonio offered to write a letter to LaGuardia introducing Alfred and suggesting that the mayor appoint him.³⁶ In October, Marcantonio offered to mention the matter the next time he met LaGuardia. In November 1939, he finally wrote the mayor explaining that his "good friend" was interested in an appointment on the New York City Housing Authority. Stern did not get the appointment but remained active in housing issues in New York. He became an ardent supporter of Marcantonio for the next fifteen years as the two became friends and political allies.

much of the scope of Wagner's original plan. [Robert S. McElvaine, The Great Depression (New York: Times Books, 1984), p.303; William Leuchtenberg, Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), p.135.]

³⁴ "Radio Talk by Alfred K. Stern, Member of Mayor's Committee on Property Improvement," Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. Stern consistently cited his experience with the Michigan Boulevard Apartments as proof of the inability of private capital investment to create profitable low-income housing [see above].

³⁵ 9/14/1939, New York Post.

³⁶ Marcantonio had been a campaign manager for the Mayor in the 1920's and won his first congressional election in 1934. On Marcantonio's life and career two biographies exist: Alan Schaffer, Vito Marcantonio, Radical in Congress (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1966) and Gerald Myer, Vito Marcantonio, Radical Politician, 1902-1954 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

Martha was not particularly interested in the specific issue of housing, nor does she appear to have been as taken with psychoanalysis as Alfred. Still, the two shared much in common. It is unclear how and when Martha met Alfred, but, by early 1938, she was seriously considering Alfred's proposal of marriage. Several people who knew the Sterns said that they first met in Chicago, before the Dodds moved to Germany.³⁷ It is also possible that they met when Martha returned periodically to the United States between 1933 and 1937 or, during the summer of 1937 when Alfred traveled to Germany. It is also possible that they did not meet until Martha returned to the United States for good in December 1937. This story was the one the Sterns intended to use in a letter they wrote to President Carter in 1977 asking for clemency.³⁸

Nor is it clear what drew Martha to Alfred. Many people, Martha included, have noted that Alfred was difficult to bear at times. Paul Trilling remembered his "intrusive" honesty. On one of its wiretaps, the FBI overheard Dr. Robert Soblen refer to Alfred as the "other smart one," a sarcastic suggestion that Alfred had a higher opinion of his intelligence than it merited.³⁹ Alfred could also be quite demanding and abrasive if denied. He pressed friends and acquaintances to run errands for him, to check with

³⁷ Katrina Vanden Heuvel was told by several friends of Martha's that Martha met Alfred while she worked for the *Chicago Tribune* in the early 1930's [vanden Heuvel, "Grand Illusions"].

³⁸ Draft Letter, Sterns to President Carter, undated, copy in possession of Author courtesy of Lilinka Sperlova. The Carter Library kindly looked in the President's papers to see if he had received such a letter. She reported that there was no appeal from the Sterns in the Carter Library [Letter, Albert Nason to John Fox, 7/1997].

³⁹ FBI Report, New York, 10/28/1947, 100-57453-111. This serial summarizes a technical surveillance on the Sterns, probably a microphone secreted in their home. It also forwards a partial transcript of the conversation cited here.

various doctors on various health issues.⁴⁰ In some significant ways, one might argue that Alfred's personality was similar to that of Martha's father, Ambassador Dodd.

Avoiding the accidental Freudian turn just taken, and in spite of Alfred's difficult personality, Martha found much to value in him. She commended his loyalty and nobility to her father. Her father, though, was less than happy with the relationship. In a letter dated June 15, 1938, the day before Martha first married Alfred, Dodd wrote:

My Dear Daughter:

"What you said today discouraged me greatly. You are free of course to do what you think best; and the individual is certainly a competent man, not a race specialist. But I fear the results: 1. Your status in the world of scholarship and art; 2. The strong drift all over the country about race isolation;⁴¹ and 3. Before August 3rd, I fear it will cause increased opposition to William, whose chance for nomination seems now to be 50 vs. 50 - since he is candidate I hope he may be successful.

Although it is not clear what Dodd meant by "race specialist," he was clearly concerned that his daughter was to marry a Jew.

BOY/PRESIDENT

Dodd's other fear, that anti-Semitic prejudice might hamper Bill's political prospects, was slightly more reasonable. In February 1938, Bill offered himself as a Democratic Primary candidate in the 8th congressional district of Virginia. Bill ran on a "New Deal" platform, proclaiming that he was a "100% New Dealer" as opposed to the

⁴⁰ See the correspondence between Alfred and Fred Jerome in the Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. The correspondence between Alfred and Max Delbrück in same is also valuable in this regard.

⁴¹ It is not clear what Dodd meant by this. The context suggests that he was referring to the general animus against mixed marriages, Protestant and Jewish in this instance.

incumbent, Judge Howard K. Smith, a conservative Democrat and chairman of the House Rules Committee. Smith often opposed Roosevelt's programs in the so-called Second New Deal period and became a thorn in the Administration's side.⁴² Bill hoped that Smith's opposition to Roosevelt's policies would be the congressman's downfall.

The Federated Press Bureau quoted Bill's platform:

Dodd [said] ...that, if elected, he will follow progressive policies such as those of Jerry O'Connell (D., Mont.) and will work with the progressive bloc. He is 32, unmarried and lives simply on \$15 a month in New York City, where he is working temporarily with the American League for Peace and Democracy as a speaker and organizer.⁴³

Bill received few campaign contributions, but those he did receive came from both foreign and domestic sources. One American supporter, a reformed Rabbi named Stephen Wise sent a contribution to him through Martha.⁴⁴ Bill had previously contributed material to a magazine Wise edited called Opinion: A Journal of Jewish Life and Letters. Wise explained to Martha that "[t]hough American [Bill] has an unusual command of the European Situation through his years of residence and study in Europe."

Bill's foreign contribution came from the USSR. Weinstein reported that the NKVD sent money through Peter Gutzeit, New York station chief. Gutzeit told his superiors in Moscow that "We think that now, before he is elected (it will be difficult

⁴² Quote from the Baltimore Sun of 12/2/1938 in Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. On the attempt to unseat Southern conservatives like Smith, see Patricia Sullivan, Days of Glory: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966) p.65. Sullivan cites a speech as an example of Roosevelt's endorsement of Dodd and others against conservative Democrats dated 9 days after Dodd lost the primary so it is not clear what was actually said.

⁴³ Item by 1/5/1938, Federated Press Bureau, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴⁴ Wise was from the Free Synagogue of New York. See letters Stephen Wise to Martha Dodd, 4/25/1938 and 9/6/1945, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

afterwards), it is necessary to recruit and help him with money for his election campaign. He may not be elected, but that is a risk we must take."⁴⁵ In so ordering the *rezident* to support Bill's candidacy, the center - expressing a combination of irony and mild disdain for Bill - changed his code name from "BOY" to "PRESIDENT." He was then forwarded an unsolicited donation of \$1000.⁴⁶

Fearing that success would make Bill more difficult to deal with, the NY Station told Martha to recruit her brother.⁴⁷ Even before his formal recruitment, it was clear that the NKVD had contacts with Bill, probably through his sister. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Bill passed information to the Soviets from his contacts prior to his official recruitment. One known contact was a woman named Helen Fuller who worked in the Justice Department. Fuller passed along the allegation that J. Edgar Hoover:

is keeping files on almost all major political figures: Congressmen, Senators and businessmen. He gathers compromising material on everybody and uses it for blackmail. In the course of the latest hearings on financing the FBI, Hoover blackmailed those Congressmen who tried to stand against [full funding] ... He used against some of them even cases of casual sex... We settled with [Bill Dodd] that he would try to get closer to [Helen Fuller] in order to get regular information from her."⁴⁸

Bill's recruit was not so well connected that she could do more than pass around the gossip of the day about the fabled omniscience of Hoover's files and dark peccadilloes.

⁴⁵ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, pp.66-7.

⁴⁶ Ibid. According to Weinstein and Vassiliev, this was not the first time that the NKVD had supported a US politician. He documents the relationship between U.S. Representative Samuel Dickstein, aptly code-named CROOK, and Soviet intelligence. Dickstein attempted to milk the NKVD for as much money in return for as little information as was possible.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.65.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.67.

The Soviets hoped that a victory by Bill would provide Bill with better sources of information.

Winning the Russian vote, Bill also hoped to gain the endorsement of Roosevelt. The President, though, was still smarting from his failed Court packing plan and did not campaign for Democrats until very late in the 1938 congressional campaigns. When, by the late summer, Roosevelt began to offer limited support to those who sought to unseat his opponents in the Democratic Party it was too late. The elder Dodd was disappointed that FDR had been so slow to support his allies against the party machinery. When Roosevelt's late endorsement finally came it did not single out Bill but encompassed several ardent "New Deal" candidates at the same time.

Although the FBI found nothing in Bill's campaign to suggest his radicalism, he was roughly handled in the election on account of his Communist and front connections.⁴⁹ In an attempt to deal with being labeled a Communist by his opponent, Bill distributed a flyer entitled "Decency Outraged" within days of the election. In it he complained of the "vicious, scurrilous and un-American campaign" waged against him. He complained that his opponent had successively called him a fascist, a Nazi, and a Communist, ideologies which he "abhor[ed]", "loath[ed]" and "detest[ed]" respectively. "The cry of Communism," Bill hopefully offered, "was the last mad shout before the ship goes down."

He found support for his "outrage" in a letter from Crandal Mackey to his father in a letter dated July 28, 1938. Mackey was the publisher of a Northern Virginia newspaper called *The Chronicle*. Mackey wrote the elder Dodd to apologize for

⁴⁹ FBI File, William E. Dodd, Jr., 101-4585-28.

introducing Dodd's name as well as that of Martha, into an article on Bill. According to the version of the letter Bill incorporated in his flyer, Mackey said that "*The Chronicle* never said any of the Dodd family was a Communist... I deeply regret even having mentioned you [William, Sr.] and your accomplished and talented daughter... [and] I am sure no person thinks that you were ever a Communist...."⁵⁰ This was not a strong apology to Bill, but his campaign incorporated it into an election flyer within days of the election, hoping to sway undecided voters by illustrating his opponent's "perfidy."

It did little good. In the Tuesday, August 2, 1938 primary elections, Bill was soundly defeated by Smith. His father lamented the poor showing "liberals" had made in the election. The senior Dodd was especially disappointed that Roosevelt avoided offending his conservative democratic allies rather than campaign for a Congress that would press forward his programs.⁵¹ Leftist candidates, in general, lost in the November election as the "brackish discontents" arising from the recession and a spirit of tiredness towards the New Deal took their toll.⁵²

Ironically, within two years of beating Bill, Representative Smith ushered the eponymous "Smith Act" (title 1 of the Alien Registration Act of 1940) into law. It made peacetime sedition a crime by forbidding persons "to ...advocate, abet, advise, or teach

⁵⁰ The flyer is found in FBI Report, Chicago, 2/11/1943, William E. Dodd., 101-4585-27. The middle ellipsis was contained in the original version. It should be noted that although Mackey says complimentary things of Bill's campaign, it is clear that he only apologizes for bringing Ambassador Dodd and Martha into the article. The ellipsis Dodd included appears from the context to conceal a further criticism of Bill Dodd.

⁵¹ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, pp.66-7.

⁵² Leuchtenberg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, pp.271, 272. "brackish discontents" is from p.283. Marcantonio was a "progressive exception" to the right-ward trend in the 1938 election.

the duty, necessity, desirability, or propriety of overthrowing or destroying any government in the United States by force or violence...." In 1947, federal prosecutors tried eleven national leaders of the Communist Party under the Smith Act. The leaders were convicted and served jail terms. Several went into hiding in the well developed Communist underground.⁵³

Bill ardently supported one early Smith Act defendant, labor leader Harry Bridges. It has been said that the Smith Act was legislated especially to deport Bridges. As the bill passed, one Congressman commented: "the Department of Justice should now have little trouble in deporting Harry Bridges and all others of similar ilk."⁵⁴ In 1941, Bill hosted a cocktail party at his New York apartment to raise money for Bridges's defense against deportation proceedings.⁵⁵

Martha's Third Great Love

In spite of her father's concerns about Alfred's religious/ethnic background, Martha was not interested in Alfred because he was Jewish. For her, the most important

⁵³ The Smith Act convictions of the ten top Communist leaders were upheld by the Supreme Court by a 6-2 vote in *Dennis v. United States* in 1951. *Dennis* was later overturned in an appeal of subsequent prosecutions of second rank Communist leaders. In *Yates v. United States* (1957), fourteen of the second tier Communist leaders appealed their Smith Act convictions. The court, this time, overturned the act and its previous decisions. For a good discussion of the case and its ramifications see Susan J. Siggelakis, "Advocacy on Trial," The American Journal of Legal History 36. An extended discussion of many of these issues may be found in Michael Belknap, Cold War Political Justice (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977).

⁵⁴ Quoted in Ellen Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998), p.98.

⁵⁵ 101-HQ-4585.

aspect of Alfred's character was his politics. In the dedication to her first novel, Sowing the Wind, she cited Alfred's "integrity and great humanity."⁵⁶ The reference to "great humanity" in this context clearly indicates something about the ideological component of the Sterns' relationship. Alfred's friends remembered him fondly for his generosity to left-wing causes, his "objectivity" and his devotion to "socialism" in eulogizing him.⁵⁷ This impressed Martha too. The two held interests in things other than politics too. Both closely followed music and drama, loved travel, and enjoyed the active social life. Clearly, common interest was crucial to their marriage.

A last characteristic of their relationship should be noted. When Alfred met Martha he was not as radical as she was. This is testified to numerous times by persons who knew Stern before and after his marriage and by his son, Alfred R. Stern said that Martha drew his father to the far-left.⁵⁸ Martha is credited with "developing" Alfred's ideological commitment. Some have suggested that Martha relished the ability to control Alfred. Others told the FBI that each thought Martha and Alfred controlled the other.⁵⁹

Whichever case may be true, Martha and Alfred remained committed to each other throughout their lives. Martha's relationship with Alfred clearly was more substantial than the one she had with Winogradow. Even so, Martha's memory of Boris

⁵⁶ Martha addressed this dedication jointly to Alfred and Robert Morss Lovett.

⁵⁷ "Memorial Meeting for Alfred K. Stern," 19 November 1986, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁵⁸ Katrina vanden Heuvel, "Grand Illusions," Vanity Fair, 9/1991.

⁵⁹ See Report, New York, 8/20/1957, 100-57453-1992, pp.2, 55 and vanden Huevel, "Grand Illusions," Vanity Fair, 9/1991. For Alfred R. Stern's comments on his father to the FBI see Airtel, SAC New York to Director, 8/23/1957. Although Alfred R. Stern's name is withheld items in the Airtel clearly indicate that it was the son of Alfred who spoke to the Agents.

remained a strong force throughout her life. As late as the 1950's, Martha believed that she might still find Winogradow alive. In 1956, soon after Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's crimes, Martha wrote Ilya Ehrenburg asking if, given the "thaw," he could find out anything about Boris for her. Ehrenburg wrote her that it would be difficult to learn what became of Boris, but that if he did, he would write her. By the late 1960's, Martha knew Boris had been executed, yet the tone of her correspondence is suffused with sadness and regret that they did not marry. At times, she wondered if her connections with him had not been the cause of his downfall; there is no evidence that she expressed either bitterness or anger over the unjust execution of her love.⁶⁰

When Martha met IGOR on June 15, 1938, she did not yet know that Boris was dead. The agent reported to the Center that Martha knew of the execution of her German control Bukhartsev (she had been told in February), and feared Winogradow had been imprisoned. Martha, he continued, was willing to put her impending marriage on hold for Boris, should he still wish to marry her.

When Martha received Boris's final letter in July 1938, she had already married. Still, Boris's note assuaged her fears about his safety. Thinking he was still alive, she replied:

You haven't had time yet to know that I really got married. On June 16, I married an American whom I love very much. ... You know, honey, that you meant more in my life than anybody else. You also know that, if I am needed, I will be ready to come when called.

⁶⁰ See Letters, Martha to Ilya Ehrenburg, 10/18/1956 and Ehrenburg reply, 1/31/1957, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

Martha and Alfred had eloped on June 16, 1938 and been married late at night at Ellicott City, near Baltimore, Maryland.⁶¹ Bill was the best man, apparently the only other person beside the justice of the peace present at the event. The day after the June wedding, Martha had written to Boris that she had fallen in love with another man, "not the wild love she felt for [him], but still a satisfactory love." Still, she wanted to see Boris and wrote to let him know that "if I am needed, I will be ready to come when called." Boris, of course, was beyond need.⁶² The Sterns planned to visit the USSR during her honeymoon and Martha wanted to introduce Boris and Alfred.⁶³

William Dodd does not appear to have known of these events, and it is clear that he did not know Stern well. Writing just before her September wedding, Martha expressed the hope that her father would learn "to like Alfred – he is one of the noblest and most loyal men I have ever known."⁶⁴ It was only that spring that Stern had written the elder Dodd a letter praising the political astuteness of his children. Stern's letter

⁶¹ See Report, New York, 5/18/1955, 100-57453-1060 citing a letter from Alfred to [name withheld, 6/23/1938]. He notes in the letter that the marriage must be kept secret until after Bill's election and, after that, it should still be kept secret as William Dodd did not know about the marriage, and the Sterns did not wish to trouble him by it.

⁶² Martha told an NKVD agent code named CHAP, Franklin Zelman[see below] about her feelings for Vinogradov. See Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, p.64.

⁶³ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, p.61. It is not clear whether the Sterns went to the USSR or not. They did travel to Mexico the next year as a letter from Ambassador Josephus Daniels to William D. Dodd, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC, indicates. If the Sterns did go to Moscow, they were not told the fate of Vinogradov, since Martha did not learn this until 1958 when Ilya Ehrenburg told her.

⁶⁴ Letter, Martha Dodd to William Dodd, 8/18/1938, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

showed the tact of a new boyfriend trying not to indicate the strength of his feelings to a new girlfriend's father.⁶⁵

Even had they not made the matter a *fait accompli* by eloping, Martha's mind was made up. Following past practice, Dodd accepted his daughter's choice with little protest. On August 24, 1938, he wrote "If you and Mr. Stern can be here the first Saturday and Sunday of September, I will engage an official to perform the ceremony." Several days later he added that he was glad they could make it to Round Hill at that time and told them not to bother wearing suits on his account, although he would wear a new one he had purchased. Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Kaufman Stern were married a second time on September 5, 1938 in Ashland, Virginia.

The minister was a friend of Dodd's and only a handful of close family friends attended. Bill was best man (again); the bride wore black. Prior to their marriage, Martha and Alfred had sent cards to friends in New York and elsewhere announcing their nuptials and inviting them to pay their respects to the new couple after their return from a European honeymoon.⁶⁶ Reminiscing several years later to his Harvard class, Alfred wrote that: "among the most satisfying events of his life were his marriage, divorce, remarriage and family life." He noted that "[in] some ways my life began for me at forty when I married the second time."

⁶⁵ Alfred Stern to William E. Dodd, 4/18/1938, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁶⁶ William E. Dodd Papers, LOC. Chicago Daily Tribune, 9/5/1938; Time Magazine, 9/12/1938; Consolidated Press Clipping Bureau of Chicago, WTA, Walter Winchell, 9/14/1938, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

Radical Chic

Martha's life had changed considerably, too. Weinstein noted that an agent reported on Martha to the Center in December 1938:

Since 'Liza' [i.e. Martha] became the wife of a millionaire, her everyday life has changed considerably. She ...has two servants, a driver, and a personal secretary. She is very keen on her plan to go to Moscow as the wife of the American Ambassador.⁶⁷

Martha had found a staunch ally and a willing bankroll for her ideological goals. She was soon using her all of her resources to aid her causes.

Between 1938 and 1940, Alfred actively sought to be named U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union. He hoped that a contribution of \$50,000 to the Democratic Party might ease the way to his nomination, as he made it known to friends and allies that he was interested in the position. He received no assurance that the administration would even consider him for the position.⁶⁸ The irony that William E. Dodd's son-in-law should consider such a path into the diplomatic corps was lost on Martha and Alfred.⁶⁹ A report from the NKVD's New York residency gave little credence to Alfred's chances.⁷⁰

Alfred also continued his antifascist efforts. In 1938, Alfred, Albert E. Khan,⁷¹ Albert Parry, and others formed the American Council Against Nazi Propaganda.

⁶⁷ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, p.61.

⁶⁸ Lydia Marcus noted this in her diary [Letter, Marcus to Dr. Douglas Wheeler, July 15, 1993, copy in author's possession; Letter May 14, 1996, Marcus to John Fox].

⁶⁹ Dodd's strong condemnation of the purchase of ambassadorial office was a criticism he frequently made of the State Department's diplomatic service.

⁷⁰ Weinstein and Vasilliev, The Haunted Wood, pp.61-62.

⁷¹ Kahn was reported by GREGORY [Elizabeth Bentley] to have been a source for Jacob Golos who ran the Silvermaster spy group. He later published Harvey Matusow's False Witness (New York: Cameron and Kahn, 1955). Matusow was a an FBI

William E. Dodd reluctantly agreed to be the group's nominal President after Alfred assured "Papa" Dodd that the role would carry few burdens. The council sponsored speeches and demonstrations and regularly published The Hour, a publication devoted to identifying Nazi propaganda efforts in the U. S. The Council dissolved in the wake of the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939. Some thought that the Council was needed more after the pact than before; Alfred sided with those who broke it up.⁷²

The Sterns devoted most every aspect of their lives to their causes as their apartment and later their country home in Westchester County New York on the border of Lewisboro/New Salem, New York and Ridgefield, Connecticut became the venue for popular social and political gatherings.⁷³ Remembering these parties, Jane Foster, a friend of the Sterns in the 1940's, wrote:

People have recently made fun of Leonard Bernstein and his 'radical chic' parties [ca.1970's], but they were no different from the kind of parties the Sterns gave. ...One day, Martha invited me to one of her receptions where, amongst her other guests, was Bill Browder, the editor of the Daily Worker and the brother of the head of the U.S. Communist Party, Earl Browder.⁷⁴

Dexter Masters, writer, friend and fellow-traveler, remembered:

informant who became a "professional witness," a regular participant in anti-Communist congressional hearings. In 1956, he rejected his earlier testimony and wrote a highly critical memoir on his role as an anti-Communist. [Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes, p.351].

⁷² FBI Report, New York, 9/20/1957, Alfred Stern, et al., 100-57453-1992, p.13

⁷³ To avoid confusion, the home will be referred to as the Lewisboro home. Although Ridgefield, Connecticut provided mail and telephone service to the home, it was in Lewisboro, New York for tax and residency matters.

⁷⁴ Jane Foster, An Un-American Lady (London, Sidgewick and Jackson, 1980). Vanden Heuvel, quotes "another friend" as saying that Martha's soirees were "early radical chic," in her article "Grand Illusions," Vanity Fair, (9/1991)

an early day, too, at [Martha and Alfred's] apartment at 30th Street and 5th. Ave, where [they] and the great Benny and Tom Wolfe and a Wolfe-idolizer from Texas and I don't remember who else sat and had some drinks and explained to each other what was wrong with the world --not all of which has been fixed up in the intervening years.⁷⁵

Thomas Wolfe remembered a different incident. About a year after Martha's return from Germany, she called to invite Wolfe to a soiree she was hosting to benefit a group dedicated to rural labor. Wolfe demanded, "Well, if you're having the Budapest String Quartet, what do you want me *for*?" Hanging up, he explained to a guest: "...damn it – a cocktail party for share-croppers!"⁷⁶

Another participant, an old girlfriend of Bill Dodd's named Lydia Marcus, noted several of these cocktail parties in her diary. She recalled Martha's gatherings as "the sort of "salon" that ... was full of very interesting and active people" and the talk often turned to politics. One "fascinating evening," Ms. Marcus wrote, an elite group gathered with Martha and Alfred. It included:

Jo Davidson [noted sculptor], Swiss? Short, beard, eccentric, exciting – little dog Pfui – crazy to stay in Spain where he did a lot of sculpture during this war – says loyalists will fight to the last drop of blood...

A woman sculptress and artist was there. German-American, lived in France. Davidson drinks a lot. So keen.

Mr. Irvin used to run a paper and be important in labor. Great booming voice.

Campaign headquarters. Dem. then labor Bob Strauss – met Langdon Post [Journalist], hoarse, drunk, didn't seem very wonderful. Dubinsky, slant eyes smile.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Letter, Dexter Masters to Martha Dodd Stern, 11/29/1976, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁷⁶ Turnbull, Thomas Wolfe, p.282

⁷⁷ Lydia Marcus Diary entry, 11/7/1938. Ms. Marcus kindly provided copies of entries which pertained to the Sterns. She dated Bill Dodd, Jr. for a brief period. [Correspondence between Ms. Lydia Marcus and Dr. Douglas Wheeler; Correspondence between Ms. Lydia Marcus and author.]

Describing another evening gathering, Ms. Marcus wrote:

I went to Mrs. Stern's house. Bob Strauss talked to me. In his bored look he keeps track of every new person entering the room. Martha Dodd's first husband, Mr. Roberts [Martha's first husband], a tall gray-haired man, in (I think) the National City Bank. It was embarrassing to be alone. Jack [Jacob] Javitz [N.Y. politician] was there with a Miss Jefferson.

[Isamu] Noguchi [a noted sculptor] is a little man... He is very polite.

Ernst Toller [anti-fascist author] has gray hair and dark hollow eyes.

Mrs. [Dorothy] Norman [an influential anti-fascist organizer] was there. Spoansors China, etc.⁷⁸

The Sterns built on these friendships and relationships and added many other influential artists, intellectuals, and politicians to their coterie. The combination of Martha's literary talent, vivacious personality, left-wing politics, and anti-fascist commitment combined with Alfred's money to form a potent social draw with political punch in the years before America's entry into World War II. Many of their guests at this time, and throughout the 1940's, would become prominent figures called before the various anticommunist congressional committees and subjects of FBI investigations.⁷⁹ Their parties, small or large, combined celebrity and cause, or at least celebrity and politics.

Many of these parties occurred during a period in which many Soviet agents lost contact with the Center. Stalin's purges had decimated the ranks of experienced intelligence agents; note in Martha's case that three of her controls were purged, two fatally. Those who had been stationed abroad, i.e. those who were liaisons between Moscow and its spies, were most likely to suffer and were most susceptible to false

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1/7/1939.

⁷⁹ This is detailed in later chapters.

charges of collaboration with the enemy/enemies of the USSR. During this time, the Center broke contact with most of its agents including the "Magnificent Five" in England,⁸⁰ the *Rote Kapelle* in Germany, Alger Hiss, the Perlo Group,⁸¹ the Silvermaster Group.⁸² Martha had no known contact with Soviet intelligence between late 1938 and 1941. This may account, in part, for Martha's invitations of Bill Browder and others to her parties; if she had been an active agent, her case officer would likely have forbidden her from maintaining contact with such high level communists because they might compromise her cover.

Through Embassy Eyes

While out of contact with the NKVD, Martha continued to use her skill as a writer to attack Nazism and to support the Soviet Union. Her most significant project, begun before Moscow broke contact, was her chronicle of life under fascism, Through Embassy

⁸⁰ Donald McClean, John Cairncross, Kim Philby, Anthony Blunt and Guy Burgess - some of the Soviet Union's most effective agents in the 1930's through the early years of the Cold War.

⁸¹ Victor Perlo's group included Allan Rosenberg, John Abt, Charles Kramer, Harry Magdoff, Harold Glasser, Sol Leshinsky and George Perazich [Haynes and Klehr, *Venona*, pp.116-153]. The Sterns worked with Abt on Henry Wallace's campaign for president in 1948[see Chapter 7].

⁸² Nathan Gregory Silvermaster's group included Lauchlin Currie, William Ullman, George Silverman, Harry Dexter White, Donald Wheeler, Solomon Adler, William Taylor, Frank Coe, William Gold, Sonia Gold, Irving Kaplan, Norman Bursler, and Anatole Volkov [See *ibid.*]. Martha and Alfred were good friends with Frank Coe and his wife, Ruth [see Chapter 8]. They also knew Owen Lattimore, a "China-hand" linked to Soviet espionage and William Remington who was identified as a spy by Elizabeth Bentley and convicted for perjury much like Alger Hiss. On Remington see, Gary May, Un-American Activities: The Trials of William Remington (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Eyes. The work is both a fascinating, well-written memoir and an unsubtle piece of political argument - one should say, propaganda - aimed at influencing popular opinion and political action. Martha intertwined a factually based narrative with a creative timeline. She manipulated her story through acts of omission and commission to present a more compelling argument for her political faith and to protect her friends and loved ones involved in anti-fascist resistance and espionage.⁸³

Through Embassy Eyes served Martha's purpose well as it became a best seller and made hers a national voice against fascism, not on par with her father's, perhaps, but not far off, in anti-fascist circles. Reviews from across the nation praised the book, considering it interesting and well written. Several, though, found deep flaws in the work, especially with regard to Martha's appraisal of the Soviet Union. Even the Office of Strategic Services [OSS] found her appraisal of Hitler's character valuable as its researchers included it in a study of the tyrant compiled during World War II.

That Martha aimed at influencing public debate is clear. Seeking out noted liberal voices to examine her work, Martha sent the First Lady a complimentary copy and wrote:

What I am really concerned about is not that it becomes a best seller, as such, but that as many Americans as possible can find some warning here against allowing or condoning any form of fascism in our own democracy.⁸⁴

Her claim, though, told of only half her purpose. Anyone reading the work would see her argument for the iconic status of the USSR. Martha expressed the argument of the "progressive" left of the fellow traveler in which the Soviet Union emerges as the

⁸³ Martha Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1940).

⁸⁴ Letter, 3/15/1939, Martha Dodd to Eleanor Roosevelt, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

antidote to Nazism. In Through Embassy Eyes, the reader finds that the USSR is a nation struggling towards the path of true human freedom and the good. It was a nascent "progressive" state. Having seen Russia, "to the satisfaction of [her] own curiosity" Martha reached six conclusions.

The first was that:

Russia was almost like a democratic country in spirit and in plans, and though poverty and dictatorship methods were still apparent, the people seemed to be getting a squarer deal, on a progressively better standard of living, than the Germans. ... These are simple observations on the working-out of different economic systems, but just as telling, nevertheless.⁸⁵

Germany, to Martha, was the epitome of Capitalism; the USSR, the epitome of democracy. Thus, she linked the problems of the Depression and the tyranny of fascism together and blamed them equally on capitalism. Martha's vocabulary - "squarer deal," "progressively better," "democratic ...spirit" - resurrect an earlier, Progressive Era political vocabulary all-the-while imbuing it with a pro-Soviet meaning.

Second, Martha found the USSR free of the prejudices that were glaring affronts to the claims the American regime embraced in the Declaration of Independence. She "saw in Russia no indication whatsoever of racial discrimination, either against the Jews or against any other group or national minorities." Third, she found that the Soviets tolerated religion. Religious attendance, she noted, "had been greatly diminished, churches were still open for those who wanted to help pay for a priest, and science everywhere was being substituted." Germany, on the other hand, could not wait, Martha

⁸⁵ Martha Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes, p.200. The quotations in the following two paragraphs comes from the same list found on pp.200-202 in Martha's book.

thought, for the inevitable substitution of science for religion and so the Nazis were liquidating religious practice "without the reason the Russians had originally."

Fourth, because "the Soviet Union was a definitely going concern," Martha realized that "the success of socialism in one country" offered "a threat to Nazi Germany." This threat was the source of the horrific stories, noted above, that the Nazi's told about the Soviets. Fear and jealousy motivated Hitler's animus to Stalin's success. Ironically, this book was published only months before the Nazi/Soviet pact. Martha's final lessons dealt with Soviet power and position in a hostile world. Fifth, she claimed that while "there was a powerful Red Army in Russia, there were no signs of its arrogance or militarism." Thus, she continued "Russia made no threats, either direct or implied, upon other nations, expressed no desire to gobble up either the territory or the people of any other country."

Martha had not found the "Kingdom of God" on Earth sought a generation earlier by Social Gospel progressives, but she believed that she had discovered the only nation working towards that end, the Soviet Union. In her vision of the "Kingdom" in the making, the Communist critique of fascism provides a strong yet unstated subtext. Martha's jeremiad urged America to oppose Nazi Germany's aggression, the author further suggested that the United States pursue an alliance with the Soviet Union, and proposed that America embrace a vision of the "progressive future" like the one the Soviet Union followed. It was towards this end that she addressed the work, "in passion and in hope," to the "general public whose voice is listened to in America."⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Martha Dodd, Through Embassy Eyes (New York: Garden Publishing, 1939), p.373.

Through Embassy Eyes presented, as a subtext, a rejection of her father's faith in the liberal/democratic tradition of the United States. Dodd considered the Soviet Union akin to Nazi Germany and fundamentally despised dictatorships. Early in her narrative, Martha remarked that she "was to see and learn later myself [whether her father's appraisal was correct]."⁸⁷ Although father and daughter fully agreed on the nature of Hitler's regime, by the time Martha let her readers know what she had concluded about the USSR, a hundred and seventy pages had passed. Her father's early criticism of the Soviet Union is all but forgotten in light of the homage Martha pays to Stalinist Russia. Martha's six lessons imply that her father was wrong about the Soviet Union. The USSR did not oppress "the freedom and initiative of the individual," according to Martha, rather it gave full encouragement and outlet to the human spirit. Martha showed no direct filial impiety as noted earlier, but she did implicitly, even esoterically, reject her father's conclusions throughout the work. There is no evidence of what Dodd thought of his daughter's work.

Martha's description of what she found in America at her homecoming suggests both her analysis of the United States and her understanding of the growth of fascism.

In the meantime ... we have had a chance to view the American scene more soberly ... We met and talked with men and women of the upper-moneyed brackets of society who openly approved of Hitler and his methods. We heard remarks to the effect that American needs a strong man who can protect capital and restrain the worker. We have seen university professors who have used their profession to propagandize Hitler. We have read books, articles, columns, and news by writers who loathe Facism and yet play into the hands of every anti-labor, pro-Vigilante group in America. We have talked with rich Jews who vote for reactionary Republicans who, not yet daring to be anti-Semitic, still carry in their programs all the demagoguery, facile and false promises of the early Hitler. We have seen workers who deplore joining unions and

⁸⁷ Ibid.

supporting groups for united action. We have listened in amazement to the proponents of isolation in America, when they can see before their eyes the immediate effects of fascism in commercial relations, in growing reactionary movements in America, in Canada, in South America, and in the world in general.⁸⁸

She argued that a nascent fascism existed in the United States awaiting acceptance by the general public. The most significant element she cites is the support of fascism by the business class. Antagonism towards unions and anti-Semitism are the other two components of Martha's critique. She, of course, was correct that all three of these existed in the United States, but her dire warnings about the potential for fascist growth were unfounded.

Against this threat, Martha offered the following:

- support Roosevelt;
- when he steps down elect a democratic and progressive president;
- help unite labor and liberal groups everywhere;
- fight all forms of suppression and persecution, all forms of anti-Semitism and Red-baiting;
- determine who is holding up "progressive and militant action in the State Department;"
- co-operate with an England free of Chamberlain and a France free of Daladier, leaders known for appeasement; end isolation.

Unless these prescriptions are followed, Martha warned, "we will discover too late that we are fighting the destructive international Fascist spirit almost single-handed, aided surely only by Russia."⁸⁹ These were the prescriptions of the Popular Front as it formed in America; Martha's ideas were not original.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp.371-372.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp.372-373.

⁹⁰ Harvey Klehr, The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade (New York: Basic Books, 1984), pp.221-222.

Less than five months after her memoir was published, the Nazis and the Soviets signed a non-aggression treaty and proceeded to divide Poland; this invasion proved the catalyst for World War II. Many Popular Front liberals, fellow travelers, and Communists, had sudden crises of faith because of this apparent reversal in Soviet policy, however, Martha and Bill Dodd did not have such a crisis. Their activism for the League against War and Fascism and their continued involvement through its change into the League for Peace and Democracy clearly suggests this.⁹¹ So too does their participation in the National Congress of the League of American Writers; Martha and Bill participated in the 3rd Congress in 1939, which took place after the Nazi-Soviet Pact and called for America to stay out of the war in Europe.⁹² The list could include many other front organizations in which Martha, Bill, and Alfred remained involved despite the shock of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Lastly, Allen Weinstein has reported that the Soviet agents who contacted her after the period during which they lost contact with her certainly thought her ideologically sound, even if in need of education in certain areas.⁹³

⁹¹ Martha's harsh criticism of Carl Sandburg, quoted above, should be understood in this light.

⁹² Report, Chicago, 2/11/1943, William E. Dodd, Jr., 101-4585-28. The League for American Writers followed the party line on the Nazi-Soviet pact and its subsequent demise when Hitler invaded Russia. Martha and Bill were also signatories to the call for the 4th Congress in June 1941. Martha was still involved with the League in 1943. Haynes and Klehr have noted that any non-Communist liberals had left the organization long before this time. Walter Goodman, The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1964), p.154; Maurice Isserman, Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party During the Second World War (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), p.21; FBI Report, NY, 11/29/1947, Alfred K. Stern, et al., 100-57453-145; John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, The Secret World of American Communism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p.20.

⁹³ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, pp.60-61.

Like all those who remained faithful to the Soviet Union through Stalin's pact with Hitler, their analysis of the political situation changed directions with the change of Soviet foreign policy. Although Martha still opposed fascism, she now supported those who argued that the "real" threat to peace and progress in the world was the imperialist war launched by the old European powers against Germany. They expected these "capitalists" to destroy each other, leaving the Soviet Union whole and above the fray. Martha, and those like her, claimed that the ultimate aim of the western powers was to destroy socialism in the only country able to implement it successfully - the Soviet Union. Since this was the aim of the European powers, the USSR was justified in dealing with Hitler to avoid being pushed into an immediate conflict with the European capitalists for which it was not ready. The Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939 became a "Kronstadt" to the faith of Louis Fischer and thousands of other Communists. Martha's faith, though, rode the train of history through this turn and several others would come in the next two decades. Chapter 4 discusses how, throughout this period, Martha, Alfred and Bill Dodd remained committed both to the anti-fascist cause and to the Soviet Union.

Chapter 4

A Pre-Maturely Anti-Fascist Family, 1938 to 1943

Family Politics

While Martha wrote her memoir between 1938 and 1939, Alfred and Bill took parallel paths aimed at securing influential positions in American politics. Bill and Martha worked together to edit diaries/scrapbooks of their father's into a well-crafted, anti-fascist political argument that was also a best seller. It was published several months after his death, but physical and mental illness had made the elder Dodd incapable of participating in the process of presenting his "diaries" long before his death. It was soon after the book's publication, that Alfred Stern and then Bill Dodd came to the attention of the FBI. Ironically, it was not Martha's intelligence connections that initiated FBI surveillance over her family, but rather the public activities of Bill and Alfred. This chapter follows these matters as well as Martha's continuing connection to Soviet intelligence.

After losing in the Virginia primary in August 1938, Bill sought to enter government service by other paths. According the Morning Sun of Baltimore, Bill took a position as an assistant in personnel with the Works Progress Administration within months of his defeat.¹ He did not remain with the WPA for long as he began to pursue

¹ Clipping, 12/2/1938, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

the purchase of the Blue Ridge Herald, a weekly newspaper published near the family farm.² Soviet intelligence took an interest in this venture too. Weinstein reports that in December 1939, the NKVD decided to contribute \$3500 to the project. The station reported that "the direction of the newspaper will depend completely on us." Apparently, the NKVD hoped the paper would prove influential to liberal journalists in the Washington area.³ The deal for the paper did not go through and Bill looked for other opportunities in the field of journalism.

Alfred Stern's lack of political success mirrored that of his brother-in-law, Bill. Since moving to New York, Alfred had been involved in the American Labor Party with Vito Marcantonio.⁴ As noted in the previous chapter, Marcantonio helped Alfred secure a number of appointed positions dealing with housing issues in the LaGuardia administration. In 1940, he ran as a candidate for a New York congressional seat on the American Labor Party [ALP] ticket.

The party at that time was in a major struggle, and Alfred was on the winning side. Although there was much "consensus on major issues" within the party, it divided

² C. D. Johns, a cousin of Bill's and Martha's from Martha Johns's family wrote "Has William bought his newspaper yet? He wrote me that he was planning something of the sort. Like to see him in Congress." Letter, C. D. Johns to William E. Dodd, 11/16/1939, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC.

³ Allen Weinstein and Alexei Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America (New York: Random House, 1999), p.67.

⁴ The ALP was formed in 1936 by a group of "right-wing" Socialists, garment union members, and assorted radicals who wanted to elect Fiorello LaGuardia, a progressive Republican, for mayor and to support FDR against the more conservative Tammany Hall Democrats [Harvey Klehr, The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade (New York: Basic Books, 1984), pp.187, 265-6]. The active members of the ALP also tended to be Jewish [Ellen Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998), p.35].

on the issue of "popular front" alliances with Communists. According to the party's initial constitution, Communists were not allowed to join. For a time the Social Democrats kept the ALP anticommunist, but Vito Marcantonio successfully forced the party to adopt a "Popular Front" approach and so the party welcomed Communists and allied "progressives" committed to the party's agenda. By the early 1940's, the Communists had secured strong command of the party.⁵

Alfred Stern was deeply involved in the party during this transition and supported it financially for several years before running in 1940. His campaign suggests how closely the ALP was associated with the Communists by 1940. In September 1940, Alfred and his supporters set up a Citizen's non-partisan committee to assist his campaign. Members included several well known Communists or fellow travelers. Franz Boas a prominent Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University, staunchly anti-fascist and pro-Soviet, a fellow traveler, was one of these. Another was Max Yergan, the executive secretary for the Council on African Affairs," a CPUSA linked organization."⁶ A third member was Michael Quill, the head of the Transport Worker's

⁵ On Marcantonio see Alan Schaffer, Vito Marcantonio, Radical in Congress (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1966), pp.50-51, 59. Klehr notes that acceptance of the Communists followed from the party's "self-effacing" attitude, large bloc of votes, potent organizers, and its accommodating approach to coalition politics (at that time). It was not until the Nazi-Soviet pact in June of 1941 that the ALP leadership sought to purge the Communists; by then they were too entrenched to remove. [Harvey Klehr, The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade (New York: Basic Books, 1984), pp.266, 268, 269].

⁶ The FBI contacted Max Yergan in July 1957 about his prior relationship with Stern. He told them that he had first met Alfred Stern in the early 1930's when he contacted Julius Rosenwald regarding contributions for the YMCA. Yergan also mentioned traveling with Stern to meet with Robert Morss Lovett concerning racial problems in the US Virgin Islands. No mention was made of their mutual work in the ALP or later in the Progressive Party. The reporting agent noted that "Yergan stated that he was not closely associated with STERN and that he could furnish no additional

Union. Quill's nickname was "Red Mike" because he was both a redheaded Irishman and a Communist. Alfred's final "red" committee member was Joseph Curran an ally of the CPUSA and the leader of the CIO National Maritime Union.⁷ Connolly, Curran and Quill were "lieutenants" in Marcantonio's machine; not surprisingly, Marcantonio agreed to allow Stern to use his name in campaign flyers and other solicitations.⁸ The final members of Alfred's committee included Henry Epstein, the NY State Solicitor General and Paul Kern, if they had communist leanings, this author is unaware of them.

Alfred's platform took a solidly liberal stand on the issues of the day and aimed at the left-wing base of his party. One campaign flyer read:

Alfred K. Stern ...And His Defense for Democracy
Platform:

1. Keep America out of War
2. Defend Labor's Rights and Civil Liberties
3. Increase W.P.A. Relief and Employment
4. Stop Discrimination Against Negroes⁹
5. Prevent Exploitation of Consumer
6. Enlarge Youth Program
7. Expand Public Housing and Health Programs

information concerning STERN'S associates or activities." This author would conclude that Yergan was less than forthright. [FBI Report, NY, 20 September 1957, 100-57453-1992]." Curtis MacDougall, Gideon's Army (New York: Marzani & Munsil, 1965), p.681 and Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes, p.375. On the Council on African Affairs see Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes, pp.40 and 375.

⁷ The list of names is from a Letter, Alfred Kaufman Stern to Vito Marcantonio, 9/3/1940, Vito Marcantonio Papers, New York Public Library [NYPL]. On Curran see Klehr, The Heyday of American Communism, p.213; on Quill see Klehr, The Heyday of American Communism, p.234 and Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes, p.35; on Boas see Curtis Macdougall, Gideon's Army, pp.635-37;

⁸ Letter, Vito Marcantonio to Alfred Kaufman Stern, 9/6/1940, Vito Marcantonio Papers, NYPL.

⁹ Stern's stance on civil rights was the feature of his platform that pressed furthest from the stance of the other parties of the day.

8. Broaden Social Security
9. Tax Those Best Able to Pay.

"The best defense for Democracy is to strengthen and extend it," Alfred's flyer concluded.¹⁰ Although running on a strong, "New Deal platform," Alfred's chief claim to a place on the ticket was that he could finance his own campaign in the Fall 1940 elections. Vito Marcantonio won his race, but other ALP members did poorly. Alfred lost in a landslide to the Democratic incumbent.

Alfred also tried several publishing ventures. The March 27, 1939 New York Times reported that Alfred had become vice-president and a member of the board of directors for Modern Age Books.¹¹ Modern Age announced its plans to publish books with a liberal/"progressive" bent at a reasonable cost like fifty cents. According to Herbert Romerstein most of the books published by Modern Age were by Communists; some anti-fascist liberals like journalist H. V. Kaltenborn, an acquaintance of Martha's from Germany, were also published.¹² In 1942, "this organization was dissolved, but its physical assets were taken over by Alexander Trachtenberg, who was Secretary-

¹⁰ "Alfred K. Stern ...And His Defense for Democracy," Campaign Flyer, MD Papers, LOC. Emphasis added for page-setting purpose, format does not mirror that of original campaign flyer.

¹¹ "Alfred K. Stern ...And His Defense for Democracy," Campaign Flyer, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

¹² Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel, The Venona Secrets: Exposing Soviet Espionage and America's Traitor (Chicago: Regnery, 2000), p.124. Romerstein and Breindel note that after Whittaker Chambers broke with Soviet intelligence (ca. summer of 1938), representatives from Modern Age Books attempted to track him down, suggesting that there was a connection between Modern Age and Soviet intelligence. This places Alfred's involvement in the organization after the Chambers incident.

Treasurer of International Publications, and an alternate on the National Committee of the Communist Party, U.S.A."¹³ Alfred's connections with the enterprise ended at that time.

Bill, Martha, and Alfred worked openly together on a number of projects as well between 1939 and 1942. In September 1939, each signed a letter advocating collective security with the USSR, which was then published in Soviet Russia Today, a current events magazine with a very pro-Soviet.¹⁴ The Dies Committee cataloged many similar activities and soon the Sterns and Bill Dodd had long lists of possibly subversive acts following their names in the files of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. These lists eventually become part of their FBI records as well.

U.S. Week / In fact

In March of 1941, the trio founded U. S. Week, a "progressive" magazine published in Madison, Wisconsin. It lasted until December 1941. Variety announced the publication of this new "liberal" weekly and noted that William Dodd, Jr. was to contribute to it.¹⁵ The announcement did not note that the start-up capital for this project came from the William E. Dodd Foundation, the financial legacy of Ambassador Dodd. Martha and Bill managed the philanthropy, Alfred, the finances. The Foundation aimed to further Ambassador Dodd's internationalist and democratic anti-fascism. U. S. Week appears to have been the only project funded by the Foundation.

¹³ FBI Memorandum, Hoover to [State Department, Passport Division, referred], 5/17/1955, 100-57453-Check.

¹⁴ Soviet Russia Today was published by Alfred's long time friend Corliss Lamont. The two met at Harvard and remained friends until Alfred's death in 1984. Lamont was a staunch fellow traveler.

¹⁵ Variety, 19 February 1941.

The magazine itself was largely derivative of the successful New York radical publication, PM. The bulk of U. S. Week's staff and much of the material it reported came from PM. Doris Berger Hursley, daughter of Socialist Victor Berger, was the editor. Other staffers included: Bill Dodd as foreign news columnist; Leo Huberman, a labor reporter from PM Magazine; Donald Ogden Stewart - "a Hollywood writer and former chairman of the Communist dominated League of American Writers"; and Richard O. Boyer - a foreign correspondent for PM and later editor of the Communist periodical New Masses. Its staff was a "strange coalition of gradualists [i.e. social democrats and Socialists] and Communists."¹⁶ Martha helped in the organization of the effort and maintained an influence in the weekly's editorial direction, but she did not contribute material to the magazine.

U. S. Week bore a uniquely Dodd stamp. According to historian Stanley Shapiro, the weekly deviated from typical radical publications in that there was "something fundamentally Jeffersonian and homespun in its democratic faith" and "in its sense of optimism and confidence in the people." Shapiro also noted that U. S. Week's position on intervention varied over the course of its brief existence, and appears to have "almost perfectly paralleled changes in public opinion." It was a radical publication "remarkably free of sectarian jargon and logic."¹⁷

Be that as it may, Martha and Bill's interests mirrored those of the Soviet Union. When Hitler invaded Russia in June 1941, the two applied for passports and visas to travel to the Soviet Union to cover the Russian front as freelance correspondents for U. S.

¹⁶ Joseph R. Conlin, ed., The American Radical Press, 1880-1960, Volume 1 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1969), p.299.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.299-301.

Week. The State Department denied their request. Martha later suggested the reason for State's action was that she and her brother "were known as dedicated "premature" anti-nazi's."¹⁸ Her disappointment in not being allowed to travel to Russia, Martha later noted, led to her first novel, Sowing the Wind, published in 1945.¹⁹

In its life of less than a year, U. S. Week attracted the interest not only of its small readership but the State Department as well. Secretary of State Adolph Berle, perhaps taking offense at the strong criticism of Department policy by the weekly, asked the FBI to investigate. The Bureau's results showed that those involved with U. S. Week tended to be members of the Communist Party, fellow travelers, or members of various Communist front organizations. One FBI informant described the publication as "a mid-western version of the Daily Worker;"²⁰ another claimed that "the Communist Party was forming a new publication entitled, "U.S. Week," ... and that WILLIAM E. DODD, Jr.,

¹⁸ By "premature" she meant that she and her brother had opposed Hitler before it was fashionable to do so. The term "premature anti-fascist" or "premature anti-Nazi" was adopted in the late 1930s/early 1940s by many fellow-travelers and others who were allied to the communist left. It was adopted as a badge of honor to suggest that those who opposed the communists and their allies were nascent fascists, at least until the start of World War II. Since many of the most public anti-fascist groups in the west before the war were communist inspired, membership in these groups was often taken as a sign of communist sympathies and, therefore, potential disloyalty.

¹⁹ "Postscript to the new German edition of Sowing the Wind, December 1958," and "Reflections on a novel, April 1958," Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. "Changes Made, Sowing the Wind, later editions, 1958."

²⁰ Information from FBI Letter, Director, SAC Chicago, 2/11/1943, 101-4585-29. Quote re "mid-western version of Daily Worker" from FBI Report, New York, 12/30/1942, 101-4585-15. This informant also suggested that Bill Dodd edited his father's Diary to fit the Communist line, that the publication of U. S. Week in Wisconsin was aimed at exploiting the strong isolationist tendencies of that region, and that Bill Dodd was strongly anti-British.

was to be a staff writer."²¹ The information received was largely correct, but what Berle thought of it was not recorded. The issue was probably moot before the report was submitted as it ceased publication eight months after it began.

At its dissolution, the magazine's outstanding subscriptions were transferred to In fact, another news magazine that considered itself to be progressive.²² In fact was written and published by George Seldes. He began it in 1940 with the financial help of several unnamed friends; FBI agents later speculated that the Sterns may have been part of this group given their close connections with the Sterns. Seldes' mission was to produce an illustrated weekly "one step left of center" consisting of "two press columns by [himself], one reporting "suppressed news," one of press criticism. In fact aimed to support "liberal causes such as the Spanish Republic against Nazism and Fascism." Its subscription list largely came from the CIO and numbered two hundred thousand at its zenith. Seldes claimed that his greatest contribution through In fact was the 1944 defeat of Martin Dies, chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Seldes suggests that In fact's "exposé" of Dies's connections to certain Texas oil companies and their illegal actions was the "gun that blew Martin Dies into oblivion;" while this claim is questionable, Seldes' publication did reach a large audience.²³

²¹ FBI Report, San Francisco, 10/30/1947, 101-4585-66, p.2.

²² FBI Memorandum, 5/17/1955, JEH to [Referred, State Department, Passport Division], 100-57453-Chk.

²³ Seldes neglects to mention a few things: *vis* the fact that the CIO-PAC had targeted Dies for defeat prior to Seldes' exposes, Dies was sick, and, although in for a tough fight might have beaten his opponents had he been up to the fight. He decided not to run for reelection in 1944. Seldes also neglects to mention that Dies's defeat was temporary; he returned to the House in 1953 for six years. [George Seldes, Witness to the Century: Encounters with the Noted, the Notorious, and the Three SOBs [New York: Ballantine Books, 1987], pp.347-360 and Goodman, The Committee: The Extraordinary

The Sterns' involvement with In fact was not surprising given the evidence of their close connections and cooperation on common projects. Seldes had been a reporter in Germany for the Chicago Tribune before the Dodds arrived in 1933 and trained Martha's friend Sigrid Schultz to replace her. While his tour overlapped with Dodd's, he received an important rumor from the Ambassador concerning the relationship between the Hearst news service and the Nazis. Seldes claimed that Dodd told him that Hitler had "practically bought the editorial policy of the Hearst's nineteen large city newspapers for \$400,000 a year."²⁴ When this allegation was published in Ambassador Dodd's Diaries, Hearst sued the publisher for libel and received an apology, but little else.

The Sterns, Bill, and Seldes maintained a close connection even after the dissolution of U. S. Week and the transfer of its assets to In fact. This interested the FBI. In the course of the Bureau's first investigation of Alfred Stern [1941-1943], Director Hoover asked the New York office for a copy of a September 4, 1942 letter from Alfred Stern to [George Seldes]²⁵ that was mentioned in a report on the case. In the letter, Stern informed [Seldes] that he had recently been told by Lawrence Cramer, chairman of the Fair Employment Practices Committee or FEPC, that the FBI followed several FEPC agents as they collected information about labor and race problems in Birmingham,

Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities [Farrar, Strauss and Giroux: New York, 1964], pp.167-171.]

²⁴ Seldes, Witness to a Century, p.474. This story was first told in Ambassador Dodd's Diary and led to a suit of the Dodds by the Hearst concern. See below.

²⁵ [Seldes's] name was withheld in the report under FOIA exemption (b)(7)(C) to protect the individual's privacy. From the context, the individual is clearly George Seldes, a radical journalist and friend of the Sterns. When redacted names are identified in this dissertation they will be enclosed in brackets [] like Seldes' name is enclosed above.

Alabama.²⁶ Hoover took great pains to keep track of criticism of the Bureau in order to defend his organization. The possibility that agents might stir up complaints by other government organizations was something Hoover avoided. The FBI probably obtained the letter improperly as it came from a source "who had access to the records and personal papers of Stern."²⁷

Seldes had close business, political, and social connections to the Sterns. Correspondence between the Sterns and Seldes clearly shows that the three socialized together.²⁸ On another occasion, Seldes sent Vito Marcantonio material on British democracy when he heard from Bill Dodd that Marcantonio was interested in the subject.²⁹ Seldes later turned to Vito Marcantonio for help when the State Department pressed In fact to register as an organization associated with a foreign government. Seldes was also involved in an advisory capacity on the publication of Ambassador Dodd's Diary; the Diary is discussed below.³⁰ Anticommunist columnist, Westbrook

²⁶ FBI Airtel, Director to SAC NY, October 24, 1944, 100-57453-4.

²⁷ The letter was enclosed with a cover letter in 100-57453-5. Its origin is not noted.

²⁸ See the file of Seldes correspondence in the Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

²⁹ Letter, Vito Marcantonio to George Seldes, 1/16/1941; Letter, 2/18/1945, Seldes to Department of State, Copy to Marcantonio; Letter, Undated, Seldes to Marcantonio, Vito Marcantonio Papers, NYPL.

³⁰ Letter, Charles A. Beard to Miss Martha Dodd, 10/25/1940, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC. In the letter, Beard took offense at Martha's handling of the introduction he wrote for Ambassador Dodd's Diary. Martha had submitted to the publisher a version of Beard's introduction in which she and Seldes had made several corrections. Beard chastised her for her action and informed her that he directly submitted his version to publisher. "You may see my copy [at the publisher's] but you are not at liberty to make any alterations without first securing my approval. The postscript to the letter suggests the changes concerned matters emphasis - Martha tried to make Beard's praise of her father stronger than the historian had written.

Pegler, wrote that the Sterns bought their country home on the border of Connecticut and New York from Seldes.³¹ When he was interviewed by the FBI in 1957, however, Seldes denied having any close connection to the Sterns.

At this time, Alfred also provided aid to Soviet intelligence agents involved in the Trotsky assassination and its aftermath. It appears that he was unaware of the significance of his activity, but simply thought he was aiding antifascist friends. In 1944, FBI investigators concluded that Stern was "acquainted with LYDIA ALTSCHULER." Altschuler was the main subject of the ALTO Case, an FBI investigation into a series of coded messages sent in 1941 from Mexico to Altschuler who acted as a "drop" for facilitating correspondence between Soviet agents. The mail was related to the attempts to free Ramon Mercader who was jailed in Mexico for the 1940 murder of Leon Trotsky. At the time, the Bureau was only able to track down some of the recipients and investigate their lives in the hope of determining their relationship to each other. It was during this investigation that Alfred was linked to the subjects of the investigation.

Alfred came the Bureau's attention again because he tried to help an unidentified woman to enter the United States from Mexico in 1942. The agent noted that the person Alfred was trying to aid [name withheld] who "is ... active in the Free Germany Movement in Mexico City."³² Stern later tried to help Otto Katz, another soviet agent he met while working with *Freies Deutschland*. Katz sought immigration papers in order to come into the United States from Mexico. At the time, Katz was involved in the attempts to secure Mercader's freedom. From a much later memo in the Stern file [100-57453-

³¹ "As Pegler Sees It: Says FDR Sent Stupid Envoy to Berlin," New York Journal American, 9/25/1946. Cited in FBI Clipping, 9/25/1947, 100-57453-A Pegler.

³² FBI Report, New York, 1/6/1945, Alfred Stern, et al., 100-57453-6.

202] it appears that Alfred had contacted Jimmy Roosevelt, the president's son, to intervene on behalf of Katz. The details of Alfred's role remain unknown and it is unlikely that he knew their significance at the time.³³ Because Vasilli Zarubin ran the various post-assassination operations aimed at freeing Mercader, it is possible Alfred later learned of his role in these when he became involved with Zarubin.

Ambassador Dodd's Diary

At the time the FBI first began to examine Alfred's activities, Martha and Bill were working on their most significant joint project, a best selling edition of their father's eponymous diaries, Ambassador Dodd's Diary.³⁴ It is argued here that Dodd must have had little if any input into the creation of this edition of his "diaries." Furthermore, an analysis of the book's sources and creation suggest that there may not have been a series of diaries to draw from at all. The creation of the diary, it appears, is problematic and

³³ On the ALTO case see the Venona File documents released to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and discussed in his recent book, Secrecy: The American Experience (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). The FBI Venona documents are available in the FBI FOIA Reading Room and on the FBI web site.

³⁴ Martha and Bill also worked together other writing projects in the early 1940's. In 1941, they signed a contract with Row, Peterson and Company to assist historians Henry Steel Commager and E. C. Barker in writing a secondary school history textbook called Our Nation. Barker and Commager had both been students of Ambassador Dodd's. According to the division of royalties, the Dodds were only minor contributors to the work. The division of royalties suggests the Dodd's contributions were to be of an editorial nature; Barker was to get 5.5% of the royalties; Commager 3.0%; MDS 3/4% and WDJ 3/4%. Our Nation remained in print for many years, although no mention was made of Martha and Bill's contributions in editions after the 1950's; the author was unable to check earlier editions to confirm if this was true throughout. See the file on Our Nation in the Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

suggests that the work may have been created by Martha and Bill for purposes that might not have been in keeping with their father's.

To show these things, let us begin with Dodd's return from Germany in January 1938 with special reference to what he and others have said about his writings on his ambassadorship. According to Martha, he bore 12 black notebooks of clippings, documents, and notes to himself with him when he returned. Prior to this, Dodd had told publisher Edward Aswell that he had not contemplated publishing his thoughts about his service while he was Ambassador because the government would not allow it.³⁵ Dodd did not spend time working his notes and snippets over for posthumous publication either. He had time for neither compiling his thoughts about his German years and even less time to work on his long planned *magnum opus* on the South. If Dodd had time to write, his first effort, arguably, would be his "History of the South."

Instead, upon his return, Dodd embarked on an exhausting schedule of speeches and anti-Nazi activism. If anything, his pace quickened after his wife's untimely death in May 1938. Mattie's death affected him greatly, but he pressed on in his work. The amount of his anti-fascist work meant he had less time to do his own writing and research than during his ambassadorship.

This hectic pace wrecked his health. In early December 1938, less than a year after his return and less than eight months after his wife's death, Dodd almost killed a

³⁵ See Robert Dallek's Democrat and Diplomat: The Life of William E. Dodd (Oxford University Press; New York, 1968), p.374 quoting a letter of Dodd to Edward Aswell, 7/8/37: "... a book about Germany, based on my experience and contacts, would not be approved by the Government ... Therefore, ...I shall not be able to submit a manuscript to you."

four-year-old girl in a hit-and-run accident.³⁶ The subsequent trial and Dodd's conviction almost destroyed him. The judge did not send Dodd to jail on account of his "diminished mental capacity and his poor physical health," but he did revoke Dodd's right to vote as he was now a convicted felon, a sad blow to the Jeffersonian Democrat.³⁷

Although the governor of Virginia quickly restored Dodd's right to vote in recognition of services past, Dodd was a broken man. A chronic throat condition, the symptoms of which began to appear during his legal troubles, destroyed Dodd's physical and mental health even further. During the spring of 1939, Dodd tried to maintain his antifascist activity but by the summer, he was hospitalized at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York. Recovering slightly, he returned home where Bill and a full-time nurse cared for him. Dodd's mental health was clearly diminished. For several months his nurse had been ordered not to mail correspondence he wrote except for those letters to Martha and Alfred. His mental state had so declined that his children did not want his erratic missives to be known outside the immediate family.³⁸ Dodd died on February 9, 1940.

Ambassador Dodd's Diary was released by Harcourt, Brace and Company in January of 1941. Noted historian, Charles Beard, contributed the introduction. By November, it had gone through four printings. The book soon became the talk of

³⁶ Dodd was on his way to a lecture and struck a young girl with his car. He did not stop, thinking that he had missed whatever or whomever it was, and, satisfied that a car behind had stopped to make sure everything was alright, left the scene. He was arrested upon his return. An unfeeling note he wrote and an arrogant attitude towards his victim only made matters worse. In the end, he pleaded guilty rather than face a contentious trial. [Fred Arthur Bailey, William Edward Dodd: The South's Yeoman Scholar (University Press of Virginia; Charlottesville, 1997), pp.195-8].

³⁷ Bailey, William Edward Dodd, p.198.

³⁸ Letter, 2/21/1940, Alfred K. Stern et al., to Mrs. Curtis, Re Patricia White, RN, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC.

Washington, in part for its "candid" evaluations of many career diplomats and politicians. Even after World War II, the book remained in publication in a number of countries. Colonel Green, an Army officer in charge of publishing the Infantry Journal in the U.S. occupied section of Germany, considered printing the book for distribution in the occupied territory in 1947 to introduce the peoples of these territories to a prominent democrat and anti-fascist. The State Department quickly stopped the proposal probably because a records check with the FBI revealed extensive subversive contacts on behalf of Martha and Bill. Despite this set back, The Diary was published in at least seven languages over the next decade and remained in print in several East Bloc countries through the early 1960's.³⁹

When it was first published in 1941, Ambassador Dodd's Diary received accolades from many commentators. A reviewer for Youngstown, Ohio Vindicator wrote: "Today one of the indispensable sourcebooks of the decade 1930-1940 has been published." The New Republic found in the weight of Dodd's witness a warning: "It can happen here." Theodore Draper reviewed the work for the New Masses and noted that "an honest man went to Berlin" and was abused for it. The American Political Science Review also dealt with the book favorably concluding that it would be an important resource for historians of the period.⁴⁰ And, Louis Budenz, praised Dodd, via a review of the Diary for his honesty and support for "collective security." Budenz concluded that

³⁹ Letter, Martha Dodd to Albert and Herta Norden, 5/29/1947, Martha Dodd Papers. See Chapter 7 on the republication of Martha's works in the East Bloc.

⁴⁰ See the clippings in the file on Ambassador Dodd's Diary, Martha Dodd Papers, Ambassador Dodd's Diary.

Dodd is entitled to the praise his children pay to his memory in publishing the Diary, i.e. "He kept his democratic faith in an age of betrayal."⁴¹

The American Historical Review [AHR] panned the book for its lack of scholarly apparatus describing deletions and translation issues and for failing to offer explanatory material. "The contents of the Diary are most uneven in value," noted diplomatic historian Thomas A. Bailey wrote in the AHR. Other reviews were also unfavorable. The Chicago News called the work "highly indiscreet" and castigated those involved in producing it for many "betrayals of confidence" that could bring scores of "honest liberals to the torture chambers of the Gestapo." It noted that one expert estimated as many as 400 people could have been compromised by the work; Martha vehemently denied such a possibility arguing that she and Bill and their father had spent great amounts of time combing through the work to prevent such betrayals.⁴²

Whatever the critics' views, the book did influence the foreign policy debate concerning the U.S. and Germany. The New York Times of February 8, 1941 observed that the Soviets had found the work useful as Tass reported that the Diary "exposes behind-the-scenes activity of a number of American politicians ...including William D. Bullitt ...[who] according to Dodd, seemingly approved unlimited oppression against the Soviet Union."

The Nation noted that Ambassador Dodd's Diary has been used by both sides on the war question. The President had cited it against Senator Burton Wheeler and the

⁴¹ Louis F. Budenz, "Dr. William E. Dodd - 'A Democrat Who Kept the Faith' - Indicts Bullitt and British Lords as Salesmen of Munich," Daily Worker, 3/14/41, copy in Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴² Clipping from the American Historical Review, January 1942, in the file "Reviews and Related Materials, 1941," Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

isolationists have been using it to get at William Bullitt, whom Dodd disliked, and others in the diplomatic corps. The Nation continued, "now Hay Franklin, former State Department man and administration confidant, has written to PM that Dodd's memoirs are unreliable so far as American officials are concerned. The Diary, he said, makes "entertaining reading. But can scarcely be considered the final authority in judging men or institutions."⁴³ The Nation took Franklin's remarks to be a thinly veiled, official defense of the administration

Burton K. Wheeler, the powerful Senator from Montana, was incensed not only by Roosevelt's criticism, but by what he read in the book as well. Wheeler had been a Progressive, but by 1941, had become a strong opponent of administration foreign and domestic policy. The Diary related the events of a dinner party in which Dodd listened to "a certain well-known senator" who talked like a Nazi and advocated German domination of Europe, Japanese domination of Asia, and American domination of the Americas.⁴⁴ Hatred and ignorance animated his harangue, the Diary reported. The Diary concluded that most at the party supported Hitler. The Nation noted that FDR used Dodd's work against Wheeler. Wheeler responded to the charge in The Diary by proclaiming that Dodd, a man "compounded of pretty poor material and ethical stuff," had lied about him.

⁴³ "In the Wind," The Nation, 2/22/1941.

⁴⁴ The party occurred in Georgetown on February 1, 1935. The phrasing would appear odd in a typical diary and suggests, instead, editorial license. Burton K. Wheeler, a Progressive Democrat from Montana, was a strong supporter of New Deal programs at first, but became a staunch critic of Roosevelt's 1937 Court Packing Plan and increasingly isolationist over the course of the decade. Roosevelt suggested that Wheeler was a member of "The Hater's Club" in reference to his staunch opposition to Roosevelt's foreign policy, tacitly branding his opponent a fascist. James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1956), *passim*.

Perhaps the most powerful party to take offense at The Diary was the Hearst Publishing Empire. The Diary claimed that Hearst's International News Service [INS] supported Mussolini and Hitler and suggested that the dictators had obtained favorable press coverage through bribery and similar under-the-table means. George Seldes, as noted earlier, claimed that Dodd told him a similar story. Hearst threatened to sue, and demanded removal of passages concerning Hearst and INS. His lawyers argued that "It is false to claim Nazis gave INS a large sum of money."⁴⁵ Martha did not want to back down, but the publisher offered an apology rather than face Hearst's court attack. Fulton Oursler wrote to Hearst that "We published statements from Dodd's Diary believing the news was in the public interest." Dodd, he continued, must have been misinformed regarding INS and Nazis. No retraction appears to have been made in subsequent editions.⁴⁶

Besides questions and claims of libel, a deeper issue has haunted the Diary since its publication, its authenticity. In the radical New York periodical, Decision, a commentator noted that "during the last weeks there has been much discussion about the authenticity of [The Diary]...." A number of important persons deny Dodd could have ever imagined certain things, the report cautioned, and "many people were inclined to believe that some parts of his diary were somehow made to fit the present political

⁴⁵ William E. Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴⁶ Letter, Fulton Oursler to William Dodd, Jr, 2/13/1941, encl. Letter, Fulton Oursler to Hearst, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC. Dodd had been a sharp critic of Hearst since World War I and had based his story on rumors peddled by a disgruntled reporter in Germany [Bailey, William Edward Dodd, p.182].

circumstances." The article went on to dismiss such claims, noting in support of this dismissal that Wheeler and Bullitt, had both recently acted just as Dodd had described.⁴⁷

Other commentators have been less certain about whether Dodd should be credited with the work. One reviewer, quoted above, suggested that Dodd would not have published certain "intemperate" descriptions of fellow Roosevelt officials. Diplomatic historian Thomas Bailey condemned the work for lacking a scholarly apparatus explaining translation matters, footnotes for sources, explanation of deletions, and being of uneven value as a source; all factors which draw one's attention to the work's authenticity. His criticism suggested that the absence of this information called into question the veracity of the work.⁴⁸

Others went further in their complaints. Arthur Schlesinger noted in his autobiography that Ambassador Dodd had told him that he did not have time to keep a journal. Dallek, before dismissing the concern, noted that "[Schlesinger] assumed, charitably, that the young people had pieced it together from the father's private letters to friends. When [he] suggested this in a letter to the son, ...[Bill] made no reply."⁴⁹ Arthur

⁴⁷ "Expose," April 1941, Decision, New York City, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴⁸ Thomas Bailey, review of Ambassador Dodd's Diary, by William E. Dodd, ed. by William E. Dodd, Jr., and Martha Dodd, in The American Historical Review, XLVII, January 1942, pp.390-392.

⁴⁹ Dallek, Democrat and Diplomat, p.373, note 23 citing Arthur Schlesinger, In Retrospect: The History of a Historian (New York, 1963), pp.120-121. The other significant critique claiming some degree of fraud in the Dodds' book was the review by Bailey (see above).

Schlesinger, Jr. has said that his father suspected that Martha and Bill severely edited the Diary for ideological reasons.⁵⁰

Against these claims, both of Dodd's biographers have each accepted the work's authenticity, but there are reasons to question this favorable appraisal of the work's authenticity.⁵¹ Certain facts about the creation of the Diary call into question the assumption that Ambassador Dodd's Diary was simply the edited diary/diaries of Ambassador Dodd. The most important of these is that the originals either did not exist, were destroyed, or have not yet been made public. Two archives hold diaries of William Dodd. At Randolph Macon College are several Dodd diaries that cover the years 1916 to 1920. The other extant diaries are in the William Dodd Papers at the Library of Congress and cover 1924 and 1926.⁵² The diaries for Dodd's most important years, 1933-1938, though, are not found in any public depository. There are several dozen cubic feet of Dodd's personal and professional papers and several more cubic feet of Martha Dodd's papers housed at the Library of Congress but the diaries, what would surely be a significant historical source on the rise of fascism in Germany and America's response to it, are not in these papers.

⁵⁰ Letter, April 1991, Mr. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. to Dr. Douglas Wheeler, copy in author's possession.

⁵¹ "Expose," April 1941, Decision, New York City, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁵² In a letter dated 9/5/1945 from Martha to Dr. Luther H. Evans of the Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC, she wrote: "I am returning my father's diary (ms), which has not been published in full, until present conditions pass farther into "history" as history is commonly understood." Martha probably refers to the 1200 page ms that Barnes helped pare down to publishable length rather than the actual "diaries" of Dodd. It does not appear to be currently in the Dodd papers at the Library.

Dodd's diaries would have been of significant historical value and, surely, his children, one of whom was a professional historian by training, realized this. Dodd certainly would have preserved them and it is safe to deduce from the care that Martha and Bill took of their father's papers that they too would have saved them. It is inconceivable that they would have simply destroyed them as lacking in value. Another reason for their absence must exist.⁵³

It lies in the work that Martha and Bill did in making their father's "diaries" into a publishable work. In showing this, we must first determine what source material existed. In an unpublished reminiscence on her father, Martha wrote:

The Diary is not a finished work. My father thought of it as "notes" to himself that he had expected later to enlarge and edit. His notebooks were full of clipped-on letters, newspaper articles and pictures, which he intended to include in a big volume, a fully documented diary of his years in Nazi Germany. But he did not have time. Death intervened. ...His method of work was systematic: after a day of intense activity at his office, comprising consultations with his staff, interviews, reading, study of documents, sending off telegrams and reports to his government, writing articles and speeches, going to the hated round of parties, he would still force himself to work regularly, often late at night, on his history of the Old South and to write some lines in his notebooks so that fresh impressions of events and people would not be lost. It was the instinct of an historian and writer, of an indefatigable worker.⁵⁴

This description is quoted at length because Martha's public description of the creation of Ambassador Dodd's Diary contradicts other known facts.

⁵³ Information about the transfer of Martha's papers and her father's papers came from the Library of Congress control files on the two collections. Access to these was helpfully provided by Dr. John Earl Haynes of the LOC. The Sterns' FBI file and Martha's papers also contain information about the provenance of the Dodd's collections.

⁵⁴ "Profile of My Father," [ca. 1941], Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

That Dodd kept notebooks as Martha described appears indisputable. Dodd referred to them in correspondence and an interview upon his return to the United States in 1938. Furthermore, the available examples of his earlier diaries suggest Dodd kept some kind of record of his days. What is also clear is the chain of ownership of the Diary. According to Martha's correspondence and statements, she and Bill were given control of the diaries and began editing them for publication under his direction.⁵⁵ After Dodd's death in 1940, his papers went to Martha and Alfred's house in Lewisboro, New York, where they were examined by a representative of the Library of Congress and at least two historians; no mention is made of the diaries in the correspondence with any of these three parties.⁵⁶ When critics claimed that the Diary was fabricated, Martha selected one "black notebook" and displayed a page of it in the window of Scribner's bookstore in New York City with the corresponding page from The Diary.

Professor Dallek has argued that The Diary should be taken at face value; in short, it clearly expressed Dodd's Jeffersonian world-view and no other political ideology. This argument appears in an extended footnote where Dallek fairly presented the claim that the diaries are not authentic, accurate, or valuable. In large part, he disagreed with such assessments. Dodd's correspondence and an interview he gave upon his return to the United States in 1938, Dallek argued, confirmed the existence of diaries. Furthermore,

⁵⁵ It is this phrase, "under his direction" that I find most troubling. Given the progress of Dodd's illness he could not have provided much direction at all.

⁵⁶ Lowery Ware wrote a thesis on Dodd's academic career. Although he quotes Dodd diaries, these were earlier diaries edited by W. Alexander Mabry for the John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph Macon College (Ashland, Virginia). They covered the years 1916-1920. Ware's thesis makes no reference to any other diaries although he was granted access to Dodd's papers by Martha. [Lowery Ware Price, "The Academic Career of William E. Dodd," Unpublished Dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1956.]

from his research and professional evaluation of the work, Dallek concluded that it was a valuable historical resource.⁵⁷

The crucial piece of evidence for Dallek, though, is what the historian describes as "a forthright letter" that he received from Martha Stern in 1968. Martha wrote him that she wanted to "'lay the ghost' about the matter of the *Diary* once and for all." "A couple of dozen black notebooks" consisting of comments by Ambassador Dodd, clippings, correspondence and other scraps were maintained by her father during his tenure as Ambassador. After his return to the U.S. and during his subsequent illness, Martha continued, Dodd allowed his children to copy the diaries with a view to later publication. "We naturally edited it as carefully as we could," Martha told Dallek, and "included some of the letters and reports, took out potentially dangerous material (such as references to German anti-Nazis)" and thus put the diaries into a publishable form. The publisher, Harcourt Brace, then assigned Joseph Barnes to help the Dodds as they pared down a 1200 plus page manuscript to about 450 published pages.⁵⁸ She told Dallek about the Scribner's display of a notebook "open at a page to show [Dodd's] writing and the exactitude of the printed work."⁵⁹

From this Dallek concluded:

Although the *Diary* was partly drawn from other sources, and is consequently something other than what we usually think of as a diary, it has nevertheless proved to be of value.

⁵⁷ Dallek, Democrat and Diplomat, p.375.

⁵⁸ This manuscript does not appear to exist as it is neither in the William E. Dodd Papers or in the Martha Dodd Papers at the Library of Congress.

⁵⁹ All quotes are from Dallek footnote cited above.

Even Schlesinger, Dallek notes, cited the book in his own work.⁶⁰ In comparing it "against both historical events and Dodd's letters and diplomatic reports, [he] found the Diary to be generally accurate." In short, Dallek proceeds as if the Diary should be taken as it appears. Bailey does the same.⁶¹ Dallek's analysis and Bailey's acceptance of the Diary would be reasonable if the provenance of the work were not so suspicious.

The book may follow a diary form, i.e. chronological entries describing various days in Dodd's ambassadorship, but it little resembles Martha's description of the original materials her father collected. This may be seen clearly on page one:

June 8, 1933. Thursday.

At 12 o'clock in my office at the University of Chicago, the phone rang. "This is Franklin Roosevelt; I want to know if you will render the government a distinct service. I want you to go to Germany as Ambassador."

I was greatly surprised ...I hope you will ascertain whether the German Government takes exception to my *Woodrow Wilson*.

He replied: "I am sure they will not. That book, your work as a liberal and as a scholar, and your study at a German university are the main reasons for my wishing to appoint you. ...I want an American liberal in Germany as a standing example."

The dialogue is well crafted and formal. This polished entry did not come from the "notes to himself" that Martha described and bears no resemblance to the other diaries of Dodd's that may be examined.⁶² Dodd was a strong writer and, had he edited the work

⁶⁰ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The Politics of Upheaval (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), p.141.

⁶¹ It is also of note that Dallek uses Martha's memoir without evidence of second thought as regards the character of the work or its source; Fred Bailey appears to have made this same error.

⁶² Several Dodd Diaries exist for comparison. At the Library of Congress are diaries from 1928 and 1931 [William E. Dodd Papers, Box 60]; at Randolph Macon College Library are two earlier diaries. Entries in the Library of Congress Diaries are similar in some ways to the entries in Ambassador Dodd's Diary, though, less polished. For example, the October 22, 1931 entry reads:

himself, perhaps would have presented the same scene, but, stylistically, the passage is Martha's work. Given this, it is worthwhile to return to the creation of the diaries in more depth. In recreating this chronology, it becomes apparent that Dodd could not have played a significant or even influential role in editing his diaries.

While Dodd was incapacitated, first at Mt. Sinai, and then in bed at home, journalist Joseph Fells Barnes helped to prepare the manuscript for publication by reducing it by almost two thirds in length.⁶³ Martha's "candid" letter told Dallek that the original manuscript was some 1200 pages and that Barnes helped the Dodds to edit it down to the length at which it was published, about 450 pages.⁶⁴ Barnes told the FBI a

Arrived in Indianapolis at 7:30 this morning: informal talk on history writing at breakfast at University club 8; at 10 an address in one of the churches on History and Patriotism - half of the time devoted to Beveridge contribution and weakness.

The May 6, 1928 entry reads:

The papers carried the headline today: "Max Mason quits University of Chicago." It has been my opinion for a year that he might resign. But the real cause for his going may not be the proper one. He is not a fit [unclear word] for the position.

The first entry illustrates that Dodd's language in his diaries tended to be more perfunctory and quickly written than the prose cited from Ambassador Dodd's Diary. On the other hand, the second entry suggests that Dodd certainly expressed his wit and sharp tongue in his diaries just as in Ambassador Dodd's Diary.

⁶³ Barnes was a prominent journalist and an official in the Office of War Information. In 1951, Whittaker Chambers publicly charged Barnes with being an underground Communist. Chambers had made the charge twice earlier, 1940 to the Civil Service Commission, and 1942 to the FBI. Barnes denied the charge. [Sam Tannenhau, Whittaker Chambers (New York: Random House, 1998), p. 456 and note 47 on p.590.

⁶⁴ Dallek, Democrat and Diplomat, p.393

similar story when agents interviewed him about the Sterns in June of 1957.⁶⁵

Correspondence between Martha and Barnes places this editing in the middle to late summer of 1940.⁶⁶ Barnes told the Bureau he met with Martha at least 12 times over the summer and fall of 1940 in reducing the manuscript that Martha and Bill produced by 750 pages. Even had William Dodd been involved in producing the 1200 page draft, extensive work on the Diary was completed after his death. Reducing a manuscript by 66% entails many choices about what is of value or not that can completely alter an author's original purpose. This alone suggests that the influence of Dodd's children on the final version should not be cavalierly ignored.

Any attempt Dodd may have made to organize his notes on his ambassadorship could not have progressed far. When he was healthy, Dodd would have handled the editing himself but did not on account of the pace of his public appearances; when he was not healthy, he was incapable of it. Martha, though, implied several times that her father's assistance played a significant role in editing the work before he died.⁶⁷ When a review of Ambassador Dodd's Diary in the *Chicago Daily News* criticized all involved in the project for failing to protect liberals and anti-Nazis, Martha strongly replied that

⁶⁵ Report, New York, 6/18/1957, 100-57453-1794. Barnes said that he thought the Diary "was an important document in the development of an anti-Hitler, interventionist public opinion in the United States, and it was begun, edited and published during the period of the Nazi-Soviet pact when the Communist Party line all over the world was anti-interventionist ...and committed to Molotov's infamous statement that Hitlerism was simply a matter of taste."

⁶⁶ See for example, Letter, Barnes to Martha, 9/9/1940, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁶⁷ See Clipping, 5/28/1941, Chicago Daily News, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. Martha wrote that she, Bill and her father had taken great care to avoid compromising anti-Fascist Germans.

"Father was very careful to protect the liberals and anti-Nazis."⁶⁸ Furthermore, Martha noted that she and Bill had gone through the work with "a fine-toothed comb" to avoid compromising any anti-Fascists. The Diary, Martha claimed, was edited while their father was alive and he had agreed to allow his children to publish it; both statements are true, but neither indicates Dodd played a role in the process. Martha argued that those critics who said Dodd would not have published the intemperate descriptions of many in the diplomatic world, therefore, were wrong. Ambassador Dodd fully approved of the work and wanted his harsh assessments publicized according to Martha.⁶⁹

The chronology described above suggests that Martha's "candid and forthright" tale was deceptive. For additional reasons, her claim that William Dodd played a significant editorial role in creating Ambassador Dodd's Diary is probably also false. Although it is clear that Dodd compiled scrapbooks of notes, clippings, pictures and other ephemera, Dodd did not keep a coherent, sustained journal of his ambassadorship. The published work, therefore, must be very different from the original.

In light of the analysis above, the mystery of what happened to Dodd's black notebooks becomes more intriguing because their absence appears purposeful. An accident, theft, or other loss, after all, could have been explained with regret. When one considers that Martha's diaries are also not available, the absence appears purposeful. Given the interest Soviet agent Zelman expressed in Martha's diaries, it is possible that

⁶⁸ Emphasis added.

⁶⁹ Clipping, 5/28/1941, Chicago Daily News, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

both hers and her fathers diaries are in the FSB archives in Russia or in a Prague archive.⁷⁰

Such analysis necessarily raises a question about the impact Martha and Bill may have had on the content of Ambassador Dodd's Diary. How much did it differ from what Dodd would have done were he capable of writing or editing it himself? A close reading of the Diary, not surprisingly, shows a deep disdain for Nazism, most especially the anti-intellectualism of Hitler and his minions. This would clearly be in keeping with Dodd and his career. If there were intentional bias on the part of Martha and Bill, it would appear elsewhere. Given Martha and Bill's Communist sympathies, evidence of it would most likely find it in their treatment of the Soviet Union.

In Through Embassy Eyes, Martha suggests her father thought the Soviet Union was a tyranny, much like Germany. As seen earlier, over the course of her memoir she rejected this evaluation. Significantly, the Diary makes a much more positive appraisal of the USSR than this earlier quote. References to the Soviet Union primarily concern the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, Jacob Suritz.⁷¹ In the work, Suritz emerges as the only diplomat, aside from Dodd, whose goal was peace. According to the Diary, when Dodd planned for a first meeting with the Soviet, his wife cautioned him against it much as

⁷⁰ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, p.64. The Sterns' library was willed to a Czech National Library and given by the library to the Library of the Czech Parliament upon Martha's death. Neither the Sterns' attorney in Prague, Stanislav Myslil, nor the library had a list of the books donated from the Sterns' collection. Letter, Stanislav Myslil to John Fox, February 12, 1997; e-mail, Czech Parliamentary Library to John Fox, February 1997.

⁷¹ Suritz was Ambassador from 1934 to 1937, therefore, the references mentioned above refer to him. When the Diary was published in East Germany references to the fine furnishings and wealth in the Soviet embassy were removed [see correspondence in the files on Ambassador Dodd's Diary in the Martha Dodd Papers.].

Martha's parents had cautioned her against going to Russia in 1934. Dodd, though, dismissed her fears and met with the Soviet diplomat, finding him very different from his wife's preconceptions. According to the Diary, Suritz and Dodd explored working together several times, but the pace of events and American reticence about working with the Soviets prevented significant cooperation.⁷²

An analysis of The Diary's treatment of Stalin's purges provides evidence that editorial falsification may have entered the work. In June of 1937, the Diary noted the Russians had executed eight Red Army Generals for conspiring with French and German fascists to overthrow the Soviet government. The Diary offhandedly reports that those executed were charged with conspiring to hand over the Ukraine and to denounce Soviet treaties with Czechoslovakia and France. The Diary says Dodd thought:

What was really behind it all I can hardly judge, but [Fritz] Wiedemann [personal adjutant to Hitler from 1934], who sat next to me at the table yesterday, said that he had to get all possible information he could Saturday and Sunday and telephone it to Hitler, then at Berchtesgaden. ...That makes me wonder if some of Hitler's chiefs had not been doing something in Russia.

It then noted that Dodd remarked that the German press decried the executions as great crimes against humanity and that Herman Goering was in charge of the press, therefore the German reports were highly suspect. The Dodd of The Diary argued that Stalin's purges were not the crimes that Hitler's 1934 purges had been. Ironically, this entry was dated only months before Martha's lover was executed on similar charges.

Aspects of The Diary were clearly consonant with the "Communist line" of the day. Martha and Bill constructed The Diary during the period of the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

⁷² William E. Dodd, edited by Martha Dodd and William Dodd, Jr., Ambassador Dodd's Diary, (Harcourt, Brace and Company: New York, 1941), pp.294-5 for example.

To be strongly pro-Soviet in the United States at that time would have made it difficult to get the book published and would have relegated its distribution to a small, sectarian audience. The book, though, aimed to influence a much wider audience including anti-fascists, intellectuals, and Roosevelt Administration officials. It also sought a hearing in the wider public sphere in order to influence American public opinion.⁷³ It is fair to suggest that Martha would have learned from the criticism of her memoir and Bill would have learned from his experience at William and Mary about the problem of being too publicly procommunist. Both could have muted their ideology to strengthen the effect of The Diary.

The last entry in The Diary suggests that the propaganda purpose of the work was clearly akin to that of Through Embassy Eyes. It summarizes all that took place from the time Dodd returned through his wife's death in May 1938. It highlights Dodd's concern about the lack of freedom in the fascist world and calls upon "Democratic peoples" to maintain their faith, improve international cooperation, and to remind everyone of the importance of world peace. The Dodd of the Diary proclaimed that "so many influential men have failed to see that ...cooperation and peace are the first conditions of prosperity for the masses of men everywhere." Dodd, an old Wilsonian, may have said something akin to this; a fellow traveler espousing the Communist line would have said the same thing.

⁷³ Joseph Barnes at a late point in the editing process wrote Martha that he "hope[d] very much ...that [Martha would] give Life or some similar magazine a chance at a section or two, and make sure that they really know what is being offered to them. It ought to improve the sale of the book enormously, in my opinion [Letter, Joseph Barnes to Martha Dodd, 9/9/1940, William E. Dodd Papers, LOC]."

In the end, the evidence now available does not prove beyond a doubt the extent to which editorial license affected the book. Had Dodd composed the work, it might have been a different book. Even so, the tenor of the work is generally consonant with Dodd's life and thought. Dodd could well have provided the ammunition for attacks on some of Roosevelt's State Department. The propaganda effect of this book aimed more at the long term than the present with whom he had bitterly warred and by whom he felt betrayed. In many ways, the Diary's barbs and points aimed at the future interpretation of the West, its role in the coming onset of World War II, and relations with the USSR at the time. The East Bloc publishers who reprinted the work in the 1950's and 1960's, in part, saw this as the work's propaganda value and a way to reward those in favor. Given Martha and Bill's use of their father's reputation, this is quite possible. Lacking further evidence, though, the solution to the conundrum of how much was Dodd's and how much was his children remains unsolvable.⁷⁴

Talent Scout⁷⁵

By the time Harper and Row had begun the fourth printing of Ambassador Dodd's Diary, the NKVD had reestablished connection with Martha. On September 24, 1941, Martha met an agent named Franklin Zelman. Because the NKVD had been out of contact with Martha for a couple of years, Zelman took great care to examine Martha's career and present life. He wanted to know of her activities in detail to make sure her

⁷⁴ It is a problem that the historian has to consider when using the Diary as a source.

⁷⁵ In intelligence jargon, a talent scout is an agent who identifies potential agents for recruitment.

political positions had not changed and that she had not been compromised as an agent to U.S. counterintelligence.⁷⁶

According to Weinstein, Zelman was fascinated and appalled by Martha's numerous affairs. She told Zelman of her "weakness for the Russians" and love for Winogradow and of writing "Uncle Joe" two letters (in 1937/8) asking for permission to marry him. She then recounted her numerous liaisons with persons in Germany. Zelman worried about Martha's promiscuity and queried her both on her past relations and present life with Alfred. He then explained that the Soviets were "only interested in personal morals when they reach the political plane," and told her when sex is permissible "in our kind of work." Zelman told the Center that he had "lectured on more than he knew."⁷⁷ Martha renewed her relationship with the NKVD and recommended a number of persons that the NKVD might consider for recruitment.

Martha impressed Zelman and she continued to work for the Soviets at least as an occasional "talent spotter," i.e. a trusted person who sounded-out people for possible recruitment as an agent. Bill was Martha's first recruit. On February 5, 1942, Martha made a second recommendation to Vasilli Zarubin, the New York *resident*. She recommended that her husband, Alfred, would be a valuable asset to her work. Martha feared that his open advocacy of far-left/Communist causes would expose "our work." Martha's fears were reasonable but, in one respect, moot. The FBI had begun its first investigation of Alfred only two months after she had been re-contacted by the NKVD.

⁷⁶ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, pp.63-64.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.64-65.

The NKVD must not have had any indication of the Bureau's interest in Alfred as approval was given to Martha to bring her husband into her work.

Martha's third, and most successful recruit, was Jane Foster.⁷⁸ According to both Jane's account and Martha's correspondence with writer Dexter Masters, Masters introduced the two women outside of Carnegie Hall during the summer of 1941. Masters was escorting Foster to a concert by Sister Rosette Tharpe. Martha and Jane, apparently, became good friends and Jane subsequently frequented the Sterns' parties until she moved to Washington, DC. After knowing her for a year, Martha reported to the NKVD that Jane would be a good recruit.

Jane was born in California in 1912 to wealthy parents. As a young adult she married Leo Kamper, a Dutch diplomat and counterintelligence officer stationed in Indonesia. Their marriage ended, in part because, Jane became a Communist on a return visit to the United States.⁷⁹ After her divorce, Jane married a veteran of the Spanish Civil War and of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, George Michael Zlatovski. Their tempestuous marriage weathered many fights and separations. It was during one of these separations that Jane met Martha.

Jane attended many of the Sterns' parties after the meeting at Carnegie Hall. At one party in June 1942, she was introduced to William Browder and subsequently met him a number of times in Greenwich Village. Jane reported that she was surprised at such attention given her lowly status in the party. She was even more surprised when

⁷⁸ Jane's married name was Jane Foster Zlatovsky. She used both forms of the name but is typically referred to as Jane Foster. This is the form that shall be used here.

⁷⁹ The primary source of information about Jane Foster's life is her autobiographical apology, An Un-American Lady.

Browder suggested she draw back from publicly demonstrating her communism.

According to Foster's account, she found Browder's suggestion that she not put so public a face on her communism puzzling but welcome. Jane said she did not like picketing, petitioning, going to meetings, or distributing literature.⁸⁰

Jane moved to Washington, maintaining contact with unnamed Communists while the NKVD considered her background and suitability for recruitment. On June 16, 1942, a cable was sent from the Soviet consulate in New York to Moscow. Vassili Zubilin, then head of NKVD operations in the US, informed Lieutenant General P. M. Fitin that through or by the suggestion of LIZA, the *rezidentura* was cultivating a "fellowcountrywoman," Jane Foster.⁸¹ It was not until after the decrypted message was released in August of 1964 that the Bureau was able to identify LIZA as Martha Dodd. At the time of this message, Zubilin reported that Foster was working in "WASHINGTON in the DUTCH [unrecovered] [? translator] of Malay languages". The rest of the message concerning Foster was not recovered.⁸²

Chronologically this cable fits well with what is known about Foster through her own autobiography and other sources. According to Foster both Browder and Martha Dodd had pressed Jane to leave open Party work as she would be more useful in other

⁸⁰ Note Jane apparently followed Party discipline fairly well in NY contrary to her earlier disavowal of this.

⁸¹ Soviets referred to foreign Communists as fellowcountrymen or fellowcountrywomen.

⁸² See appendix for a general discussion of the use of Venona as a historical source with explicit reference to transcript #854.

Given the amount of information that the Bureau had gathered in its MOCASE investigation this failure was probably due to the difficulty in decrypting the cable itself rather than an investigative failure.

areas. Upon moving to Washington, Foster was asked to turn in her Party card and to maintain contact with the Party through an unidentified woman. This woman took a strong interest in Jane's plans for employment and did not look favorably upon her intention to take an assignment in Ceylon [Sri Lanka] for the OSS. It is between Jane's move to Washington and the acceptance of the OSS assignment overseas that the Venona transmission occurred. The Venona transcript suggests that Jane's contact may have been Martha. Together these events suggest that Foster's break with the Party was not an innocent parting of the ways as Jane suggested. Rather she was directed into underground operations as Whittaker Chambers had been twelve years before.⁸³

Her final acceptance as a Soviet agent appears to have been put on hold until she returned from Asia, but the Venona decrypts make it clear that she had been vetted even before she served in the OSS.⁸⁴ It is likely that Jane was recruited before she went overseas and given a foreign contact, but there is no direct evidence that she contacted the Soviets or their agents while in the Far East for the OSS.

Martha, though, was considered a viable agent as she was not known publicly as a Communist. She had successfully spotted three agents. Given her wide connections with other fellow travelers and Communists in influential positions, Martha was expected to

⁸³ On Chambers's shift from open Party work to secret work see Chambers's Witness and Tannenhaus, Whittaker Chambers. Chambers' and Jane's stories are paralleled by many others as well during the period from 1930 to 1945. Although there is no direct evidence in the Stern file, Jane eventually confessed her role to French intelligence and to FBI representatives in France. This may be deduced from material in the file and cables between the U.S. Embassy in Paris and the State Department that may be found at the National Archives. See also Romerstein and Breindel, The Venona Secrets.

⁸⁴ Robert Louis Benson and Michael Warner, Venona: Soviet Espionage and the American Response (Washington, D.C.; Government Printing Office, 1995), p.203, Message, New York 854 to Moscow, 16 June 1942.

find more likely recruits. With Alfred's initiation into Soviet intelligence, though, the Sterns agreed to try a different set of responsibilities, providing cover for Soviet agents to be assigned in the United States and the Western Hemisphere. As the next chapter shows, Martha and Alfred joined with a long-time Soviet agent, Hollywood film producer, Boris Morros, and worked to make the Boris Morros Music Company into a front for the NKVD. It was unsuccessful as were other assignments given the Sterns. Ironically, the American government began to investigate not just Alfred but Bill as well before Alfred was recruited. These investigations are intertwined with the story of the Sterns' failed careers as Soviet agents and lead to their eventual flight to the East and so provide the backdrop for the next three chapters.

Chapter 5

In a Fishbowl - Internal Security-C to Espionage-R, 1943 to 1947

Alfred and Martha Stern first met Morros when they lived for three months in Hollywood during the summer of 1943. Later that year, though, a more fateful meeting occurred. New York *resident*¹ Vasilli Zarubin brought the three agents together and brokered a business deal between them. In spite of high hopes, though, the plan failed and the Sterns broke with Morros over personality and business conflicts. Bill, too had failed as an agent. His prior front activity brought him to the attention of the FBI and Congress and led to a Hatch Act investigation and the loss of his government job; the NKVD dropped him as an agent because he was compromised. Martha, on the other hand, found success on other levels both as a writer and Soviet agent. In 1945, her first novel was published and her first non-family recruit - Jane Foster - became an active agent. Even more important, had they known it, the FBI had found little to maintain its interest in the Sterns and, by early 1947 was ready to close its investigation of the Sterns. Unexpected information from their former partner, Morros, led the FBI to reopen the case and the Sterns' lives came under intense scrutiny for the next decade.

¹ Resident, the title applied to a Soviet agent, often operating under diplomatic cover, who oversees the spy rings or *Rezidentura* in an area. In the United States, in the early 1940s there were *Rezidentura* in at least New York and San Francisco. The New York *Rezidentura* also ran spy rings in Washington, D.C. according to Elizabeth Bentley, a spy turned informant who defected in 1945.

When the FBI first opened file number 100-57453,² on Alfred Stern, it found little of interest and quickly dropped the matter. Even two years later when Alfred was linked to several Soviet agents, the Bureau did little more than make a cursory examination of Stern. On the other hand, the Bureau launched a fairly quick and complete investigation of Bill Dodd under the Hatch Act, a law forbidding members of certain groups from government employment, causing Bill to lose his job and compromising him as an agent. Martha and Alfred, though, remained viable agents and, in December 1943, became involved in an operation aimed at providing cover to Soviet agents. It failed as did several other apparent attempts by the Sterns to be of use to Soviet intelligence. By 1947, it would appear the Sterns and the NKVD were parting ways, and yet it was at this point that the FBI first received strong information that the Sterns were Soviet agents. The receipt of this information initiated a decade long effort to learn about the Sterns and their activities that culminated in their 1957 indictment.

Internal Security - R / Hatch Act

The immediate cause of the FBI's original interest in Alfred was almost a cliché. In November 1941, the Bureau received an anonymous letter from "A Friend" concerned about activities of Alfred Stern, "a millionaire supporter of radical causes." By means of "subterranean channels", the friend claimed, Alfred supported the Communist Party of

² The "100" designation meant that the case was about a domestic security matter. The 57,453 meant that Alfred's file was the 57,453rd such domestic security file opened at Headquarters. Each field office opened their own files on Stern when needed, New York, for example, had a case number of 100-65586; Albuquerque, on the other hand, numbered its file 100-66. When the Stern case later became an espionage investigation, the file number remained the same.

the United States, radical labor leader Harry Bridges, and subversive organizations like the American Peace Mobilization, the City Wide Tenant's Council, and the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties. It "would be interesting," the "friend" suggested, "to learn how much [Stern] lists as part of his business expense [sic] items which are part of his under-hand radical activities."³ The New York Field Office launched a preliminary investigation but did little more than check its files for any other records. The Bureau found little of interest in Alfred's life and commitments.

At first, the information collected in the Stern file consisted mainly of publicly available information, i.e. news stories, magazine articles, publicity flyers, and the like. This information was supplemented by comments made by a handful of informants whose reliability cannot be gauged because their identities are withheld in the released FBI files. Information also came from several government agencies that maintained records on Alfred. These included the State Department, the Navy, the Congress, and several other government offices to which Alfred had applied.

Nor was the FBI's investigation of Alfred related to its investigation of Bill Dodd, begun almost eleven months earlier. When the FBI took first notice of Bill, it was a case of mistaken identity as a reported subversive connection of William Dodd's was to William, Sr., not William, Jr. Another allegation about Bill's subversive connections was made within a week of this first one. This too was ignored because Bill was not working for the Federal government at the time; without the nexus of a Hatch Act violation the Bureau was not interested in Bill's politics. The Hatch Act of 1939 [5 USC 118j] forbade

³ 100-57453-1. Actually, this was not the first piece of mail the FBI received on Alfred Stern's political activity that fall. On October 25, 1941, the Office of Naval Intelligence [ONI] sent a note card to the FBI [100-57453-X].

federal employees from "membership in any political party or organization which advocates the overthrow of our constitutional form of government."⁴ The Bureau paid little attention to Dodd's private politics while he was a private citizen.⁵

After the publication of Ambassador Dodd's Diary, Bill sought to find a position in the government. During the summer of 1941 (after the Nazi invasion of the USSR), Bill began working for the War Production Board. He only served there a few months before he left for a position as an Editorial Assistant in Radio Reporting with the Federal Communications Commission. Bill entered on duty at the FCC on December 1, 1941, and within a year, the FCC wanted to assign Bill to London. In December 1942, the New York World Telegram reported that the State Department had held up Bill's passport.⁶ He and Martha had been denied passports during the summer of 1941 when they asked permission to travel to the Russian front as free-lance reporters, but little notice of Bill's first brush with State was made by other government agencies.

By February 1942, a full FBI Hatch Act investigation of Bill had begun. An informant to the Philadelphia Field Office reported that "Dodd is a Communist Party

⁴ The Hatch Act was enacted on August 2, 1939. The act required the removal of that person from federal employment and prohibited the appropriation of funds to pay that person. From February 1940, federal employment forms required prospective employees to aver that they did not belong to such an organization. By 1941 Congress had appropriated funds for the Attorney General to investigate Hatch Act violations. In conjunction with this spending authority, the Attorney General drew up a list of 7 organizations, a list which subsequently ballooned to many dozens of organizations, he considered to fall under the provisions of the act. This list included the Communist Party and the German American Bund. "Report of the Commission on Government Security Pursuant to Public Law 304, 84th Congress, Amended" (Government Printing Office: Washington D.C., 1957), pp.5, 7.

⁵ FBI File, 101-4585-1 to 3. All of the discussion concerning the Hatch Act Investigation of Bill comes from file 101-4585.

⁶ New York World Telegram, 12/17/1942, quoted in FBI Report 101-4585-15.

Affiliate" and received a "good position" in the Federal Communications Commission [FCC].⁷ A nexus had been found and the Bureau initiated an investigation once Bill's employment was confirmed. Several offices reported back information on Bill almost immediately. The New York Office notified the Bureau about an article in the New York World Telegram.⁸

The earliest significant information, though, came from the Washington Field Office [WFO]. It had developed independent information about Bill's suspect connections in early 1941. A Memorandum to Assistant Director Ladd, called his attention to a report of the Dies Committee that listed government employees with alleged subversive connections.⁹ The WFO maintained liaison with the House Committee on Un-American Activities and scanned the Committee's reports for government employees alleged to be Communists, fellow travelers, Nazis, or other subversives. Notice of these claims was sufficient grounds for instituting the investigation because it was understood that Communism and Nazism, *de facto*, advocated the violent overthrow of the American government. Organizations with a number of public and/or hidden Communists or Nazis were also considered suspect. WFO Special Agent in Charge [SAC]¹⁰ McKee notified Headquarters that an

⁷ FBI Report, Pittsburgh, 12/1/1942, William E. Dodd, Jr, 101-4585-32 and FBI Report, New York, 2/25/43, William E. Dodd, Jr., 101-4585.

⁸ New York World Telegram, 12/17/1942, cited in FBI Report, Pittsburgh, 12/1/1942, William E. Dodd, Jr, 101-4585-32.

⁹ FBI Memo to D. M. Ladd, 2/12/1942, William Dodd, Jr., 101-4585-NR and 101-4585-1.

¹⁰ An SAC led an FBI Field Office (also called Field Division). The SAC supervised all investigations in the Field Office from auto theft to espionage.

investigation had been initiated and leads asking for information about Bill's background were being sent to field offices with jurisdiction over areas where Bill had lived. The investigation lasted from February 1942 through March 1943.

The results consisted of lists of various notices made of Bill's public efforts on behalf of various left wing causes. It also detailed his employment record, education, comments by those who knew/knew of him, and other miscellaneous details about his life and politics. It also contained the results of an interview with Bill made after the Bureau completed its preliminary investigation. Agents of the WFO interviewed Bill and gave him the chance to rebut the information developed against him. In brief, Bill denied the most damaging of the charges (i.e. those that directly linked him to Communist organizations). He admitted to other charges and showed that some of the references were not to activities he participated in but that they were references to public appearances at various anti-fascist events his deceased father had attended. Bill did not mention that he had aided his father in scheduling these events.

By 1943, the FCC began to examine Bill's past as well. The Dies Committee had been criticizing the FCC about potential subversives in its ranks for months and finally prodded the commission to act. Chairman Fly contacted the FBI for information on Bill in early February 1943.¹¹ The internal review later declared that it found nothing to preclude Bill's employment in the government. The issue, though, remained open. The House of Representatives proceeded to set up an *ad hoc*, bipartisan committee led by

¹¹ FBI File, 101-4585-23.

North Carolina Democrat, John H. Kerr. It was given the task of investigating 39 accused subversives on the government payroll.¹²

Three of the first six names chosen for examination by the Kerr Committee came from the FCC. Bill Dodd, his boss Goodwin Watson - the chief analyst of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], and Frederick L. Schuman another FBIS employee. Walter Goodman, in his book The Committee, implies that the selection of the three FCC names was an act of political revenge. The other three names came from the Interior Department and included old Dodd family friend, Robert Morss Lovett. The FBIS had earlier disseminated a report claiming that Dies was a favorite of Axis broadcasters; Dies, Goodman suggests, was not amused to be branded a fascist.¹³

Whatever the motive for the investigation, Bill clearly sensed that he was in serious trouble. On February 15, 1943, he wrote Martha and asked her to arrange a meeting for him with Wendell Wilkie in order to interest him the problems Bill faced from the Kerr Committee. Perhaps Bill thought that Wilkie, an old Wilsonian Progressive who had evolved from a New Dealer into a Republican by 1943, would be sympathetic to the son of another old Wilsonian Progressive and lend a bipartisan tinge to his defense.¹⁴ Bill's boss, Watson, also tapped the Sterns for his defense. Watson had asked Alfred to contact any congressmen that he knew in order to explain why Watson's

¹² Ellen Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998), pp.111-12; Walter Goodman, The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1964), pp.151-2.

¹³ Goodman, The Committee, pp.151-158.

¹⁴ Letter, Bill to Martha, 12/15/1943, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

signature on the call for a National Emergency Conference for Democratic Rights did not show that Watson was associated with "a subversive organization."¹⁵

The Kerr Committee called on Bill and the others chosen for investigation to appear before closed committee meetings and explain their left-wing advocacy. In April, the Committee reported on the six investigations, declaring Dodd, Lovett, and Watson "unfit for the present to continue in government appointment."¹⁶ Because the FCC had already concluded that there was no reason to dismiss Dodd and Watson, Congress acted on its own. In May 1934, a rider, section 304, was attached to a deficiency appropriation bill stipulating that no money could be spent to pay the salaries of Dodd, Watson, Lovett. Roosevelt blasted the rider but signed the bill anyway. In effect, Bill, Watson, and Lovett were fired by Congress and, as of June 30, 1944, Bill was no longer a federal employee. He, Lovett, and Watson challenged the decision in court. In a long delayed but constitutionally sound decision, the Supreme Court upheld the U.S. Court of Claims and struck down section 304 as a bill of attainder. The Court awarded Bill several weeks worth of back pay but did not reinstate him.¹⁷

¹⁵ FBI File, 100-57453-6, pp.7 and 8.

¹⁶ Goodman, although very critical of the Dies and Kerr Committees and their work, shows that Bill and Lovett were both deeply involved in Communist and Communist influenced organizations although neither was found to be a party member. Lovett, especially, Goodman notes, was known for his open espousal of "liberal"/Communist cooperation even in the face of the Nazi/Soviet Pact. Watson, Goodman notes, admitted his earlier associations but claimed the Nazi/Soviet Pact had been an awakening for him. As for Bill, Goodman suggests that politically he fell somewhere in between the other two. Goodman notes that Dies made sure to mention in his autobiography that Bill's sister and her husband defected to Czechoslovakia (he does not note that they did so to avoid prosecution for espionage). Walter Goodman, The Committee, 151-158, 425.

¹⁷ FBI Memorandum, 10/6/1950, William E. Dodd, Jr., 101-4585-86; Walter Goodman, The Committee, pp.152-156.

Bill's failure to keep a job in government and academia made an impact on his work as intelligence agent. While moving from job to job, Bill must have been a poor source of information for the NKVD. The Soviets had hoped Bill would gather information from "leading Washington Congressmen, Senators, and government officials," primarily old friends of his father's, but his success was minimal. Bill supplemented any meager offerings he was able to contribute by passing along intelligence from the private correspondence of his father and attempting to develop contacts of his own.¹⁸ Apparently, Bill and Martha worked together on any assignments they were given by the NKVD. In January of 1942, the Center wrote Vasilli Zarubin, who had recently arrived in New York as the new *rézident*,¹⁹ that:

For the last two years, we have been making unsuccessful attempts to use [William Dodd] in different areas of work. Now the most urgent task in the further use of these probationers is to split them and to use separately what represents considerable difficulty and requires major educational work on your side.²⁰

Moscow may have been aware that Bill's cover had been blown; it was certainly concerned with the lack of performance by two agents on whom they had placed high expectations. The Center hoped that where the siblings had failed to work effectively in tandem, Martha might still be useful because she had not been identified as a Communist

¹⁸ Allen Weinstein and Alexei Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America (New York: Random House, 1999), p.67.

¹⁹ Zarubin [Zubilin was a cover name he used in this diplomatic assignment] was a legal *resident* as he had diplomatic cover. He replaced Gaik Ovakimian. Zarubin's wife Elizabeth was instrumental in helping Zarubin run his East Coast espionage operations. See Chapter 8 for more details about the two.

²⁰ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, pp.66-.

like Bill had been. By 1943, it was clear that the NKVD would have nothing to do with Bill for some time as there was too much interest in him by the FBI.

Martha and Alfred were viable agents, but their first priority remained public, anti-fascist activism, unguided by the NKVD. During the spring of 1943, Martha completed negotiations with 20th Century Fox over the movie rights to Ambassador Dodd's Diary and Through Embassy Eyes. Her memoir was to provide the film's title and the story was to come mainly from the Diary. Otto Preminger signed on as the director, Dorothy Gish as Mrs. Dodd, and Hugh Carey as the Ambassador. Preminger announced to the trade papers that the film would be bigger than *Mission to Moscow*. Early publicity for the movie set the budget at \$1.5 million dollars.²¹

Martha received \$11,000 for the movie rights; Bill had no role in the planned film and received nothing in the deal. The contract granted Martha some say on the project as a whole and the studio hired her to assist in writing the screenplay. Martha insisted on this because she had very clear ideas of how her family should be portrayed in the movie. Her character, Martha suggested, should be played by a "Margaret Sullivan type" and Bill by a "wise-cracking, agreeable, athletic American boy, typical college youth (Ronald Reagan type)."²² She insisted that there be no deviation from how she portrayed the characters of herself, her father, and her brother in Through Embassy Eyes and Ambassador Dodd's Diary. The Dodds were to be honest, full of integrity, anti-

²¹ Several contracts and legal agreements are in "Screenplays – Ambassador Dodd's Diary with Kay Fanin," Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

²² Newsclippings are in the folder "Screenplays, 'Ambassador Dodd's Diary' with Kay Fanin, publicity 1943," Undated, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. On Sullivan and Reagan see "Story Treatment by Martha Dodd," Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

fascist, anti appeasement, and anti isolationist.²³ To ensure this and fulfill her duties in writing the screenplay, Martha and Alfred rented a home in Hollywood in May 1943. Martha quickly began working on the adaptation of her memoir and the Diary with Fay Kanin, a professional screenwriter the studio assigned to the project. In Hollywood, the Sterns continued their habit of hosting soirees for left-wing and Communist intellectuals and entertainers. They developed several lasting friendships with the those who would later be known as "The Hollywood Ten." Ring Lardner Jr., Herbert Biberman, Dalton Trumbo, Albert Maltz, and John Howard Lawson. The Sterns corresponded with these Communist/fellow travelers well into the 1970's and remained friends for many decades after they first met.

The Sterns made another significant acquaintance while staying in Hollywood, Boris Michael Morros. While on the lot of Paramount Pictures, June 1943, Fay Kanin told Martha there was someone she wanted her to meet.²⁴ Kanin took Martha to the office of Morros, a native Russian born in 1891, who was the former musical director for Paramount and had become an independent producer several years before the July 1934 meeting. Impressed by the Hollywood producer, Martha took Alfred to meet Boris within a day.²⁵

²³ Martha had negotiated the rights to the Diary after the end of the Nazi-Soviet pact. During that period, as seen above, she supported organizations that were isolationist. Her father was never an isolationist.

²⁴ The evidence available does not suggest why Kanin introduced Martha to Morros. As far as I have been able to determine, there is no connection between Kanin and Soviet intelligence.

²⁵ The introduction story came from Boris Morros's My Ten Years as a Counterspy (New York: Viking, 1959). His claim is supported by Martha's comments as well.

Morros had been in the United States since 1922 and worked his way up from being an organ soloist in Boston to Paramount Picture's music director. Morros's daughter-in-law described him as a talented musician who could charm a snake. Morros' connections to Soviet intelligence were as old as Martha's as he had his first encounters with Vasilli Zarubin and others beginning in 1934. Morros provided "Edward Herbert," one of Zarubin's cover names, with identification saying the Soviet was a talent scout for Paramount Pictures. Morros periodically sent letters and money to Zarubin/Herbert in order to confirm the cover.²⁶ While using the alias "Edward Herbert," Zarubin met Martha and the two, reportedly, became friends.²⁷ Unless Kanin had an intelligence connection, the common history Martha and Boris shared probably remained unknown to each at first. The Sterns and Morros did not meet again that summer.

Preminger's boast of success faded quickly during the summer of 1943. A clipping from the Variety of July 8 indicates that Archie Mayo had replaced Preminger as director. A screen-adaptation of Martha's books by Ring Lardner Jr. contained in the Martha Dodd Papers suggests there was need to call in a professional screenwriter to redo the work Martha and Kanin had done. One cause of the failure was creative differences. An undated memo from Martha to the studio suggests this as Martha complained that:

My main objection is the interpretation of the girl as a pro-Nazi or sympathetic to the Nazis through two-thirds of the story treatment. ...The character, as now conceived, would seriously reflect on my personal reputation and would hamper my future work. ...When this picture was first presented to me... my conception was that the ambassador would

²⁶ Information is from various sources including: Boris Morros, My Ten Years as a Counterspy, FBI File 100-202317, Sections 76 to 79, and Phone Conversation, John Fox with Jo Anne Morros, 7/9/1997.

²⁷ Both Morros and Soble reported this to the FBI.

play a major role... that my role in no way would be a starring one, and that I certainly would not be interpreted as pro-Nazi....²⁸

Still, Martha found "the story treatment ...except for the development of the girl's character, [was] satisfactory..." so there must have been more problems with the production than Martha's concerns. The Sterns returned to New York at the end of July where they continued their lives as they had before; the movie project died soon after although Martha's friend, Dalton Trumbo, attempted to save it by taking over the screenwriting chore.

The Boris Morros Music Company

In early December 1943, the former "Edward Herbert", using his real name (Vasilli Zarubin), contacted Morros and told him to come to New York. Zarubin had been in the United States since December 25, 1941 and carried diplomatic cover as he ran the New York *rezidentura*.²⁹ The two met on the morning of December 22 at the Sherry Netherlands Hotel in New York City; Morros typically stayed there when he had business in New York. Zarubin drove Morros to the Sterns' "country" home in Lewisboro, New York and re-introduced him to Martha and Alfred; Morros claimed he did not remember

²⁸ Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

²⁹ Information about the meeting comes primarily from the initial statements Morros made to the FBI over the summer of 1947. These may be found in the FBI File on Morros, 100-202315. Morros's My Ten Years as a Counterspy outlines the same basic story. Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel, The Venona Secrets: Exposing Soviet Espionage and America's Traitor (Chicago: Regnery, 2000), p.7.

the Sterns at the time but that Martha reminded him of their encounter the previous summer.³⁰

The main outlines of this story come from Boris Morros' testimony to the FBI and in his book My Ten Years as a Counterspy. Morros, though, was a known exaggerator who loved to tell a good tale and so admitted in the first pages of his memoir. Before the first page is finished, Morros offers a self-serving version of his initial contact with the FBI in 1947. Many details, however, may be corroborated through other sources, including the Martha Dodd Papers, the Sterns' FBI file, the Venona decrypts, and the testimony of Jack Soble. Together, these suggest that his book can be a source, but only with great care. In this, Morros' book is much like Through Embassy Eyes and Ambassador Dodd's Diary.

Zarubin suggested that Stern and Morros form a business relationship. The Soviet diplomat wanted Alfred to invest in a small, music production company named The Boris Morros Music Company [BMMC]. Morros had formed the company in 1939, but only recently had incorporated the operation. Morros stated that he intended to pass the business to his son Richard, then attending the Severn School, when he graduated. Zarubin expected Morros to teach Alfred about the music production industry so that Morros could eventually bow out of the company. Stern would take it over and the Soviets would have a viable front through which to send agents to countries in the Western Hemisphere. He put great stock in CHORD, the operation's code name. He wrote his superiors that:

³⁰ Morros, My Ten Years as a Counterspy, p.50.

At first meeting ...we discussed all the questions of principle. I repeated once more that [Stern] wouldn't have the right to interfere in ["Chord's"] operational and commercial essence...³¹

Tempted by money and already active in Soviet intelligence, Morros eagerly welcomed Alfred's investment. Alfred, apparently, needed to be convinced because he was leery of the cost and the business. At the behest of Zarubin and prodding of Martha, Alfred finally agreed to make the investment and the next day Morros' lawyer drew up the papers for the agreement.³² Between December 23 and December 28, 1943, the Sterns and Morros met daily to hammer out the details of the agreement. Alfred invested \$130, 000 in the small company. \$100,000 eventually went with Morros to Hollywood to build up the company and \$30, 000 stayed with Stern in New York for the operation of a New York office for the company. Several years later in an interview with the FBI, an unidentified person noted that the size and success of Morros's business at the time of Alfred's loan did not warrant such a large investment. Alfred placed an additional plaque on the front door of his Rockefeller Center office indicating that he represented the Boris Morros Music Company.

In March 1944, Zubilin again told Morros to come to New York³³ and introduced him to Jack Soble.³⁴ Soble took over CHORD and some of Zubilin's other

³¹ Weinstein and Vasilliev, Haunted Wood, p.118.

³² The connection between Stern, Morros, and the BMMC is unquestionable as copies of the legal documents indicating Stern's investment were filed in New York and letters between the Sterns and an attorney friend of theirs, Charles Katz. The linkage between Stern, Morros, and Soble is confirmed by the Venona cables, Morros' testimony, Soble's

³³ Zubilin passed messages to Morros through a "cutout" named Leah Melament.

³⁴ Soble, a native Lithuanian who had emigrated to the United States in 1941, was originally named Abraham Sobolevicius. During the early 1930's he had worked in

responsibilities in the New York area as Zubilin prepared to return to the USSR at the end of the summer.³⁵ Soble did not become *rézident* as Zubilin had been. Zubilin and his wife, Elizabeth, left the United States in August 1944. The revelations of Guzenko and Bentley in September and November 1945, respectively, precluded their return.

The partnership appeared to go well at first, although not according to the plan originally worked out by the Sterns, Morros, and Zubilin. When first discussed, the BMMC was to be solely a music publishing company. Morros, returning to Los Angeles with \$50,000 of the \$100,000 he was to receive, immediately purchased a complete music production facility. This subsidiary of the BMMC, named American Recording Artists [ARA], began producing records while the BMMC sold the music to those recordings.³⁶ ARA soon had a popular hit in the song "Chattanooga Choo Choo." Hoagy Carmichael, Frances Langford, and Phil Harris were signed to the company according to Morros.

Over the course of the summer, minor problems began to appear. Alfred was displeased. He considered the title of Chattanooga Choo Choo "vulgar" and thought it would never be popular. He also questioned Morros's decision to hire Bing Crosby's

Germany infiltrating the Trotsky movement. When Trotsky migrated to Mexico, Soble maintained contacts with the exile's followers and he served the USSR in other ways too. For more detail, see appendix 2.

³⁵ In May, Morros and Soble traveled to Europe together on the Queen Elizabeth. The purpose has not been revealed, but a Herbert W. Jackson remembered Morros introducing him to Soble on the cruise. The trip became an important piece of circumstantial evidence in support of Morros' testimony in 1958 and following. [U.S. Attorney Case File 60 CR 996, National Archives, Northeastern Branch.

³⁶ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, pp.120-121.

brother, Bob Crosby.³⁷ In August 1944, Soble and Stern traveled to California and the parties involved seemed to be in agreement. At the time, neither Stern, Morros, nor Soble realized that the FBI had taken an interest in their activities together and had observed the three men together, followed their activities, and dug more deeply into the matter in which they were involved.³⁸

The FBI's interest aside, the trip appeared to have succeeded in mending fences, but things fell apart upon the return of Alfred Stern to New York. Within in a few weeks, Morros complained to Soble that Stern acted as if "he already knew more about music, both artistically and commercially, than Paul Whiteman, myself and Stravinsky combined." He argued that Stern did not understand that recording and printing music succeeded hand-in-hand because you needed hit songs to entice people to want the sheet music to play them for themselves. Stern, through the New York *rezidentura*, complained directly to the Soviets about shoddy facilities, Morros's musical selection, and the general business practices of the operation. Soble spent a good part of the next six months trying to salvage the company.

In a January 4, 1945 message from New York to Moscow, Stepan Apresyan, New York *rezident*, reported that Stern complained that Morros was not running the business properly, that he made empty promises, and over-estimated his capabilities. Stern thought that all Morros' employees, Morros excepted, were inadequate. It appears from vague references in the Stern file that this information was made available to the FBI around 1948.

³⁷ Morros, My Ten Years as a Counterspy, pp.53, 61-62.

³⁸ FBI surveillance confirms this. See 100-57453, serials 7 through 10.

After Alfred made his report, he and Soble made a last ditch effort to solve the conflict. Traveling separately but arriving in California together on February 16, 1945, Alfred and Soble went to meet with Morros. It quickly became a shouting match and Soble had to report the problems to Moscow. Soble thought that Morros had forgotten the purpose of the company, i.e. espionage cover. The Hollywood producer had become consumed with the music recording side of the business to the exclusion of the Soviet's purposes. Soble was angered by Morros' "obsessive commercialism" and demands for more money.³⁹ Alfred, "though, was even more problematic," Soble wrote:

One has to be an iron man to tolerate Alfred Stern in a commercial affair, especially in America, where risk, broad scope, and timeliness are the basic elements in any commercial enterprise ...⁴⁰

Because he could see no way of reconciling the parties, Soble asked for permission to dissolve the company. It was granted. Soble ordered Morros to repay Stern, which he apparently did except for \$30,000 Stern reputedly kept to operate the New York end of the office. Jack Soble summed up the venture for his superiors:

Several Stern letters found in either their FBI File or in the Library of Congress suggest that they were concerned about Morros and sought information about him to bolster their complaint that Morros was to blame for CHORD's collapse. In one letter dated March 15, 1945, an unidentified individual wrote Alfred that Morros "is shrewd but not when it comes to knowing what will go over in music." To his correspondent, Alfred wrote: "One of the main reasons for my withdrawal is that more funds are needed which I am not willing to advance." In June, Stern asked the same correspondent what Morros

³⁹ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, p.121.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.124.

was doing, because, he related, "I only wish the best for Boris." To another correspondent he wrote: "If you bump into Hoagy Carmichael ask him how things are going with Boris."⁴¹ Martha expressed an even greater concern. In the spring of 1945, she reported to Moscow her premature concern that Morros was a double-agent and, in a September 18, 1945 letter to Charles Katz -a friend and attorney of the Sterns' in Los Angeles - she asked: "Do you ever see Boris? And could he have by any chance poisoned your mind about Alfred. I am sure this can't be true since you know only too well how Boris tried to fleece him."⁴²

Other Intelligence Activity

Jack Soble placed the blame on both Morros and the Sterns, although he found the Sterns especially difficult to bear. Soble maintained contact with all three agents between 1945 and his trip to Europe in the summer of 1946. One reason Soble maintained contact with Martha was that she continued to function as a "talent spotter" for the Soviets. One friend Martha introduced to Jack Soble during this period was Jane Foster. According to published reports about the Stern Case and Soble's spy ring, Jane was the most significant agent in the group.⁴³

⁴¹ 100-57453-1060. The likely correspondent is Charles Katz, the Sterns' attorney and friend in California

⁴² Letter, Martha Dodd to Charles Katz, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴³ This claim is made advisedly because the full story of this ring has not been released either by the FBI or by the Soviets. Other than mentions in the released Morros and Stern files no FBI information concerning the Zlatovskis has been released yet.

While Jane worked in the OSS, the Sterns maintained a correspondence with her. In June 1945, Alfred wrote Jane to come and "pay us a visit. We really want you here and you more than deserve a furlough. If Eisenhower can take one why not you? ...Lots of love, Alfred."⁴⁴ Six months later Alfred inquired of Jane how her father was because he was sick. He also told her that he had talked to a lawyer friend of his and Martha's about how to receive an annulment or divorce from her husband, George. "It's much easier in Reno or Florida but you have to have a signed consent," Alfred wrote, "Of course, New York isn't a bad place for a divorce if you have properly cooked up the case."⁴⁵

Jane was in Indonesia at the time. At the time Alfred wrote, she was assigned to temporary duty repatriating American POW's. Between July 13 and September 9, 1945, she was on special assignment for the Office of Strategic Services to investigate the political situation there. Based on her research, including a rare interview with Indonesian independence leader Sukarno, she produced black propaganda in the China-Burma-India theatre.⁴⁶ Sukarno told Jane that his people would welcome the British troops scheduled to arrive on August 29; Elizabeth MacDonald said that according to G-2

⁴⁴ 100-57453-1060, p.36.

⁴⁵ 100-57453-1060, p.37.

⁴⁶ Black propaganda uses false information as propaganda aimed to effect an enemy's moral, tactical position, etc. White propaganda does the same thing, but uses true information. Usually, these types of operations do both. While in the OSS Jane participated in operations to convince Japanese soldiers that their family's would not feel disgraced if they gave up rather than fought to the death. She also helped produce comic book style manuals on how to sabotage Japanese supply lines. These were to be distributed to S. E. Asian natives so that they might participate in resistance measures against the Japanese soldiers. See Jane Foster, An Un-American Lady (London; Sidgewick and Jackson, 1980).

this information was top-secret intelligence. Sukarno asked Jane to pass on three requests: 1) he petitioned for speedy negotiations with Allied command; 2) he wanted Allied acceptance of the Nationalist Police Defense Force for the maintenance of law and order; and 3) he wanted the withdrawal of US forces when it was commensurate with national safety.⁴⁷ Jane rushed back with the news that the Indonesians were not planning revolution but wanted to talk peace.

In November 1945, she sailed for the US, arriving in Washington on December 11. She quickly wrote up an analysis of her Indonesian experience, submitted it to the OSS. The person who received it classified the paper "TOP SECRET" immediately. The report on the Indonesian situation was not treated as a routine piece of work but as a very important one. Within weeks of her return to the United States, Jane gave a copy of this paper to Jack Soble at the Sterns' apartment in New York City. In her autobiography, she says that she also gave copies of this report to reporters in San Francisco. In her book, An Unamerican Lady, she dismissed her action by saying that such classifications were meaningless and that she gave it to anyone interested in it as she had several copies. That she gave it to a Soviet spy, she suggests, was a fluke.

Her explanation does not ring true. Her friend Elizabeth MacDonald, for example, noted in her book how the end of the war changed how the OSS handed information. While awaiting her discharge, MacDonald had found that "The MO ["moral operations," i.e. propaganda] documents were not classified!"⁴⁸ Jane, like MacDonald, was in the MO unit. This suggests that Jane's report, which was immediately classified,

⁴⁷ Elizabeth MacDonald, Undercover Girl (New York: MacMillan, 1947), p.298.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.296.

was seen as a significant piece of current intelligence. Jane Foster was disingenuous in her dismissal of the significance of handing the report to Soble and this suggests her story about the reporters may be cover to disguise a purposeful act of espionage.

Jane's "gift" to Soble apparently marked the start of her career as a Soviet agent. Newspaper accounts of Foster's role as a Soviet agent claim that she and her husband, George Zlatovski developed information about U.S. soldiers assigned in Europe while he was in the army.⁴⁹

Between leaving the OSS and traveling to Europe to work with Soble, Jane and the Sterns kept friendly contact with each other. In April 1946, Alfred wrote to ask his daughter, Adele, about her experiences in Washington. She had gone to the Capitol for work and was staying with friends of the Sterns. "Tell the [names withheld] that Jane Foster sends her regards and will call them when she gets to Washington."⁵⁰ For a brief period around March 1946, Jane lived with the Sterns' butler, Ralph Scott,⁵¹ but, by July when her husband was returning from his military assignment, she was living in Bill

⁴⁹ The convolutions of the relationship between Jane Foster and George Zlatovsky are complex. They were married, separated, and, apparently divorced, and then remarried (perhaps more than once) between 1941 and 1947. After they moved to Europe they appear to have remained together until at least 1957, although the relationship was quite tempestuous. It is not clear from Jane's memoir what happened to their marriage after they were indicted, but indications in the Stern's correspondence with Jacques Mercier, a noted, radical French lawyer and friend who helped them explore a libel suit against Jane's estate when her book was published, suggests that George remained married to Jane until her death in 1980. The Mercier correspondence occurred between 1979 and 1980 and is in the Martha Dodd Papers at the LOC. See Appendix 1 for more detail.

⁵⁰ 100-57453-1060, p.37. The couple Alfred sent Jane's regards too is possible Susan B. Anthony and Jack Warren with whom Jane and George roomed in Washington.

⁵¹ See Letter, Martha Stern to Edgar Snow in FBI File Alfred K. Stern, et al., 100-57453-333.

Dodd's vacant apartment. Alfred had written to Bill that July telling him that: "We haven't seen Jane lately but talked to her on the phone and she is apparently enjoying living in your apartment. Her husband is due back any day now which may change her plans." In August 1946, Martha wrote to a friend that Jane and her husband were going to Europe and "will look up some of our friends. Jane and George remarried for the third or fourth time and set off for Europe. George, in a goodbye letter, wrote "Dearest Martha and Alfred, ...I love you dearly my pseudo-capitalistic friends."⁵²

That the two operated as agents during this time is suggested, first of all, by their continued contact with Jack Soble in Europe between 1946 and 1949. Furthermore, according to Morros's account, he was able to intercept several reports by Jane and George that were passed through Jack Soble for the Soviets. Lastly, as Romerstein and Breindel reported, French intelligence interviewed the Zlatovskis and allowed the FBI access to the Zlatovskis themselves or the interview transcripts.⁵³

Martha tried to keep in touch with the Zlatovskis while they were in Europe. In 1947, Martha wrote Bill asking him "Where is Jane? Do call her parents sometimes and find out. I am interested to learn for various reasons."⁵⁴ What those reasons are is not known. By this point, George's past communist connections had become an issue and he was forced to resign. He next took a job with the European Refugee Commission from which he passed on information to the Soviets about East Bloc refugees. While he had

⁵² FBI Report, New York, 5/18/55, Alfred K. Stern, et al., 100-57453-1060

⁵³ Romerstein and Breindel, The Venona Secrets, pp.295 to 296. Circumstantial support for this may be seen in the State Department correspondence concerning the Zlatovskis at the National Archives and in the Sterns' FBI File.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.38.

been in the Army, Jane gathered biographical and other information on United States military counterintelligence officers in the European theatre. The Sterns, though, never saw the Zlatovski's again and, until they learned of the impending publication of Jane's memoir in 1979, took little apparent interest in their old friends.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, Alfred Stern became involved in another business venture. Later, FBI informants claimed that the business was formed for a purpose similar to that of the BMMC. Alfred, Dr. Irving Vanya Sollins, and Jack Soble's brother, Dr. Robert Soblen formed the Inter-American Pharmaceutical Company [IAPC]. The IAPC's announced purpose was to sell pharmaceuticals in Mexico and South America. Soblen provided the medical expertise and his knowledge of the pharmaceutical industry to the venture; Stern and his partner supplied the capital for the operation. The company made three shipments of penicillin and other medical supplies before closing its doors. Both Jack Soble and Boris Morros later told the FBI that the company was to be a cover for Soviet agents like the BMMC, but their information was based on a combination of hearsay and inductive reasoning. Still, Robert Soblen was a long-time Soviet agent and so the claim may not be dismissed.

Like the BMMC, the IAPC failed quickly. Disagreements between Stern and his partner, Sollins, appear to have been the primary cause. Soblen, too, came to have strong disagreements with Stern. Robert Soblen liked neither Alfred nor Martha although he was willing to work with them. Over a wiretap on the home telephone of Myra and Jack Soble, the Bureau heard Robert sarcastically refer to Alfred as "the other smart one." His comment clearly indicated disdain for the Sterns. It is unclear how much of a direct role

⁵⁵ On Jane Foster's memoir, An Un-American Lady, also see chapter 8 and Appendix 3 below.

Soblen played in the company, but he maintained contact with Alfred into the 1950's.⁵⁶

In sum, Soviet intelligence does not appear to have taken up too much of the Sterns' time between 1945 and 1947.⁵⁷

Sowing the Wind and Family Life

Instead of clandestine work, Martha continued to write and took on a new responsibility too, motherhood. In July 1945, Martha and Alfred adopted a newborn boy whom they named Robert Dodd Stern; "Robert" was for Robert Morss Lovett. The child's mother, a young Chicago native, had divorced while pregnant and later claimed to have been pressured into giving the boy up for adoption. Her 1953 suit and its aftermath are detailed in Chapter 7. After the adoption, the Sterns took to living at their Lewisboro home most of the time.

Although Martha relied on the aid of a nanny, she spent a good deal of time caring for Bobby when he was an infant and toddler, cutting back on her public appearances, but continuing to write. Just before she and Alfred adopted Bobby, her first novel, Sowing the Wind,⁵⁸ was published by Harcourt, Brace and Company. The novel

⁵⁶ In 1955, Robert Soblen gave Jack Soble the Sterns' address in Mexico. See below. It is not clear why Soblen had their address at that time as there is no evidence he had contact with the Sterns after the failure of the Inter American Pharmaceutical Company.

⁵⁷ This is not surprising. The NKVD slowed most of its operations down at this time on account of the defection of cipher clerk Igor Guzenko and the actions of courier Elizabeth Bentley in 1945. These two Soviet agents caused a significant change in approach and energy in Western counterintelligence as they revealed the scope of Soviet penetration during World War II.

⁵⁸ Martha Dodd, Sowing the Wind, (Harcourt, Brace and Co.; NY, 1945).

paralleled Martha's experience in Germany and illustrated many of the points she made about the effects of fascism on the culture and character of the German peoples in Through Embassy Eyes. It detailed both the forces that drew a young, intelligent woman into the underground resistance and the personal costs this commitment entailed.

Her main character, Lina von Friesen, was a German dressmaker with "the freshness and naivete of girlhood," but "the sophistication" of a woman. Her "pale red and curly hair" set off her "wide-set large grey eyes." Lina had been married to a much older Jewish doctor, before Hitler's ascension to power and the start of the novel's plot, but the age difference had been too great and the two amicably separated soon after they were married. For a time, Lina loved a German air ace, Erich Landt. Landt, though, succumbed to his ignorance of the truth of fascism, his hypertrophic patriotism, and his greedy lust for power and wealth. These failings were leavened, at first, by the fear instilled in him by Nazi violence, but soon took him over. The novel traces how this heroic, talented flyer degenerated under his commitment to Germany qua the Third Reich and so lost his humanity to the fascist beast. A similar lesson concerning the effects of fascism on the human soul may be found in Through Embassy Eyes and many of Martha's other works.

Lina, unlike Landt, was heroic in her efforts to fight fascism and to aid the anti-fascist resistance. Even in the early days of the Nazi regime, she helped to carry money, food, and papers for Jews fleeing Germany; her former husband, although not wishing Lina to place herself in danger, provided her the initial entrée to the resistance. Lina's "superior intellect" allowed her to analyze the corruption and downfall of her fellow

Germans and her social consciousness insulated her from similar corruption. Eventually, though, she was caught and executed for her role as a spy.

On the surface, Lina appears to have been modeled on Mildred Harnack as Martha claimed in her comments on the novel and its sources;⁵⁹ von Friesen, though, is equally a model of Martha herself. Her personality mirrors that of Martha's more than Mildred's. So too did her romantic life, e.g. the affair with a German aviator and the marriage to an older Jew.⁶⁰ More importantly, Lina's character illustrates how Martha saw herself, explained her motives, and defended her actions. Martha constructed Lina as herself, but placed the character in the context of Mildred's life and death.

Other characters in Sowing the Wind were largely derived from people Martha knew when she lived in Berlin from 1933 to 1937:

- Erich Landt was modeled on Ernst Udet and Landt's downfall resembles that of Udet's as described in Through Embassy Eyes.
- Wolfgang von Richter was Rudolf Diels.
- Lina's shop assistant, Johanna Schreiber, resembles Mildred Harnack more than Lina did.
- Valentin Sorokin, a famed Soviet aviator in the book, is Boris Winogradov. Sorokin plays only a minor role appearing as the antithesis to Landt.
- Ludwig Kirsheimer, Lina's first husband, shows elements of Martha's first and second husbands, George Basset Roberts and Alfred K. Stern, but most resembles Carl Sandburg.
- Several press people who appear in the story are also directly traceable to Martha's experience.

⁵⁹ Postscript to the new German edition, *Changes Made*, Sowing the Wind, later editions, 12/1958, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁶⁰ Lina's ex-husband was not modeled on Alfred Stern so much as Carl Sandburg.

Martha's work drew so heavily from her life and those she encountered that her books clearly show Martha's hopes and passions.

This is not to say that these characters are exact representations of friends and acquaintances from Martha's life, often they tend to blend two or three together. A reader, though, who knows something of Martha's German experiences can clearly see its forceful imprint on the characters and story of Martha's first novel. It is certainly clear that Martha was not truthful when she wrote: "“the only characters who were modeled directly from the original were given real names: Goering, Goebbels and Hitler.”

Sowing the Wind, then, should be seen as an *apologia* for the means Martha employed to support her ideological vision. Interestingly, it barely mentions the Soviet Union. Unlike Through Embassy Eyes, the novel did not offer Martha's utopian hope in the Soviet promise, only the anti-fascist passion she rightfully held. Martha's first novel only offered a diagnosis of the illness she feared, not the false cure she sought.

That Martha still sought this cure may be seen in comments she made captured by FBI wiretaps. For example, in 1956, Martha expressed concern that Nikita Krushchev was "giving poor old Joe the works" when he denounced some of Stalin's crimes to the Politburo. Alfred replied that, in time, a more balanced view would emerge; the Soviet denunciation was simply a product of the political needs of the day. Since Martha's views do not appear to have changed, Sowing the Wind does not reveal Martha's character as fully as Through Embassy Eyes did. As it was published soon after Joseph McCarthy's downfall at the hands of the Senate, expressing a pro-Soviet viewpoint would have been very problematic.

At the time Sowing the Wind was published and the Sterns adopted Bobby, the FBI showed little interest in Alfred and almost none in Martha.⁶¹ Like many so called "political files", that of the Sterns' was mundane and brief, the invasion of their privacy minimal and without impact on their lives, while the character of the investigation remained domestic security. This did not change even when the Bureau linked Alfred to several persons known to be involved in Soviet intelligence and the investigation shifted in character from domestic intelligence investigation to a domestic security one. The FBI, as David Martin noted, clearly did not take the threat of Soviet espionage as seriously during World War II as it would immediately after the war ended.⁶²

In March of 1946, the FBI's New York Field Office sent another report to Headquarters on Stern in response to a routine Headquarters letter requesting an update of information.⁶³ Making use of open source information like Who's Who, the agent reported a number of details on Stern, his parents, and his wife. In November 1946, Headquarters requested the New York Field Office to report on what, if any, Communist Party activity Stern actively pursued. The Field Office was not pressed to answer the lead and so did not reply until March 1947. Field Office 's informants and other sources claimed that Stern was not a member of the CPUSA although he had led a delegation (reportedly Communist influenced) to Albany to demonstrate in favor of public housing

⁶¹ When the FBI first opened a file on the Sterns, it only carried Alfred as the subject. This implied that Martha was not of serious investigative concern at the time. Martha did not become a co-subject of the file until August 1947 [see serial 27X1]. It was common for a FBI file to carry many subjects, even when the identity of a subject was unknown.

⁶² David Martin, Wilderness of Mirrors (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), p.5.

⁶³ FBI SAC Letter, no.28, 1946 Series, Dated March 12, 1946, Section E.

and rent control. The New York Field Office found little of interest in these matters and placed the case in closed status. The New York Field Office told Headquarters that it would make no further investigation of Stern until such time as he "takes a more active interest in the affairs of the Communist Party."⁶⁴ Headquarters agreed; the file was closed.

The Internal Security - R investigation of Alfred Stern had ended with little done and little, apparently, discovered. The intrusion into Alfred's life was minimal; regarding Martha it was negligible. The first part of the investigation, i.e. the part stemming from the anonymous tip and the ONI information, led to nothing more than a file check. The second part, begun when the Bureau conclusively connected Alfred to suspected Soviet intelligence agents from the COMRAP and ALTO cases, led to a more detailed preliminary investigation, but revealed Alfred's radical politics and little else. Because the Bureau had observed Stern involved in a business relationship with Soviet agents, he was included in the Security Index.⁶⁵ Even this did not lead to long term, intrusive investigation. The Bureau had showed little interest in the relationships between Morros, Stern, Soble, and Zarubin, a subject for a legitimate counterintelligence investigation.

⁶⁴ 100-57453-12.

⁶⁵ The Security Index was a special collection of 5 x 8 index cards listing persons known to be connected to foreign intelligence operatives or connected to known subversive groups with connections to foreign intelligence. It was begun in 1939 after Franklin Roosevelt assigned the FBI to investigate "Fifth Column" type activities in the United States. See Gerald Haines and David Langbart, Unlocking the Files of the FBI: A Guide to Its Record and Classification System (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1993), p.220.

Espionage - R

On July 14, 1947, the FBI's indifference to the Sterns became transformed into a state of intense concern and investigative focus. In June 1947, Headquarters had ordered its field offices to follow up on any outstanding leads related to the COMRAP investigation. One such lead was to contact and interview Boris Morros about his connections with Vasilli Zarubin. Agents from the LA Field Office called Morros and asked him to come into the office and talk to them. He was interviewed in detail on July 14, 16, and 18 of 1947. Summary results of each interview was immediately telegraphed to Headquarters. The results were too important to wait for a full report to be drawn up.

Morros claimed that he had gone to the FBI on his own out of patriotic sentiment. FBI documents conclusively show that Morros was contacted by agents of the Los Angeles Field Office. Because the FBI clearly contacted Morros first it is apparent that Morros wished to avoid prosecution and other potential problems. Morros told the Los Angeles Field Office agents that he was willing to cooperate fully with them. A Memo dated July 21, from D. M. Ladd - Assistant Director of Domestic Intelligence - to Director Hoover, suggested another motive as well. Ladd noted that Jack Soble, Morros's superior, had recently left for Moscow. On his departure, he told Morros that he was going to make an unfavorable report on Morros's performance. Soble threatened Morros, saying he would have one last chance to cooperate, an "or else" hangs over Soble's threat as Ladd related it.⁶⁶ Whether the "or else" meant violence to Morros or violence to his family is not clear.

⁶⁶ 100-57453-13.

The summary telegrams from Los Angeles sparked immediate interest at Headquarters. The July 21, 1947 memo from Ladd to Hoover detailed the "new developments" arising from the Morros interviews. Ladd's memo asked the Director to recall the anonymous letter received by the Bureau in August of 1943.⁶⁷ He noted that at the time Bureau officials speculated that the letter came from a disgruntled Soviet official who clearly knew the activity of the NKVD in the United States.

Ladd continued. Although previous FBI surveillance of Zarubin had shown "numerous clandestine contacts" between Morros and the Soviet, subsequent investigation "failed to reflect further involvement on [Morros's] part in Soviet intelligence operations and consequently the investigation was closed...." Recently available information, Ladd said, had led the Los Angeles office to contact Morros in order to close several outstanding leads.⁶⁸ The case, Ladd noted in his memo, was to be code-named MOCASE "for purposes of convenience and saving of communications cost."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ This was a major break in the COMRAP case. The Communist Apparatus Case or COMRAP Case begun in 1943 appears to be the FBI's first major counterintelligence operation against the USSR. It began when a Soviet, later identified as Vasilli Zarubin, met with Steve Nelson, a Los Angeles communist. Nelson was then under surveillance and the Bureau learned that the military was running a massive, secret weapons program. This was the first that Hoover learned of the Manhattan Project. The anonymous letter arrived several months after Zubilin was identified as the man talking to Nelson. It listed several major Soviet agents in the New York *rezidentura*, including Zubilin and his wife, and mentioned some of their other agents too, including Morros. A copy of this letter may be found in Robert Louis Benson and Michael Warner, ed. Venona: Soviet Espionage and the American Response, 1939-1957 (Washington, D.C., National Security Agency and Central Intelligence Agency, 1996), pp.51-52.

⁶⁸ What this additional information was cannot be known from the Ladd letter.

⁶⁹ The memo summarized in the following pages is from Ladd to the Director, 7/21/47, at 100-57453-13. Cases, like MOCASE, that received code word designations are also known as major cases.

Ladd's memo next summarized the information that Morros had recently supplied. Morros claimed that Vasilli Zarubin had introduced him to Alfred Stern in 1943 and had insisted that Morros take Stern into his music company and train Stern in order to turn the firm over to him eventually. Stern contributed \$130,000 to Morros' company at Zarubin's request and thus became a partner with Morros. The sum, Ladd noted, was confirmed in the previous investigation of Morros that had arisen out of COMRAP. After the meeting, Morros returned to Hollywood to put Stern's capital to use in expanding his company. Morros did not say, at first, that the operation was to provide cover for Soviet espionage; one New York agent was sharply criticized for saying that he had in a report summarizing the Stern Case to that point. Morros did make this claim within several weeks of having begun to work for the FBI; his initial reticence appears to have been an attempt to mitigate his guilt, but no conclusion may be made until the transcripts of these interviews are released.

Ladd's summary proceeded. Zarubin soon called Morros back to NY and introduced him to another Soviet agent, Jack Soble, as Morros' new superior. The prior FBI investigation of Morros, Ladd informed Hoover, had shown that Morros and Soble were in contact with each other throughout 1944 and 1945. Ladd surmised that because Soble had become Morros' superior, Soble may also have been the unidentified "Jack" who was the superior of the informant in the GREGORY case, i.e. the investigation arising from the allegations made by Elizabeth Bentley. Prior investigation of Morros also turned up evidence of the February 1945 trip Soble and Stern made to see Morros and that Soble had told Stern and Morros to make up, confirming another point Morros made in his July interviews. The FBI's previous investigation showed that Soble was

quite angry over Alfred's and Morros's inability to come to an agreement and threatened Morros and his family. The details known matched many of Morros's claims thus providing the *bona fides*⁷⁰ needed to trust the information Morros was providing. The information furnished by Morros, Ladd stated was "of paramount significance." Morros's "apparent willingness to cooperate may constitute the most significant development in the Bureau's coverage of Soviet espionage since the breaking of the CORBY and GREGORY cases more than 18 months ago."⁷¹

Hoover responded to Ladd's memo with deep concern:

An angle giving me great concern is that we had some of these clues for sometime and closed them out and only recently reviewed the case and reopened it with these startling developments. How many other like situations exist right in our own files is what concerns me?

Such a note demanded immediate and comprehensive action. Hoover ordered the Special Agent in Charge [SAC] of the New York Field Office to be flown immediately to Washington for a briefing and, in order to ensure that Morros was not double-crossing the Bureau, discreet but comprehensive surveillance of all of his activities was to be made.⁷²

The Morros interviews sparked an intensive and extensive investigations of the Sterns, the Sobles, the Zlatovskis, and many other persons implicated by Morros' testimony. Almost overnight, the character of the Stern Case changed from Internal

⁷⁰ "Bona fides," in intelligence jargon, refers to independent corroboration of information given by a source, informant, agent, or double-agent. Without such corroboration, the truth value of an agent, especially one who had been on the opposite side, could not be assessed. The information would be worthless.

⁷¹ CORBY refers to the defection of Soviet code clerk Igor Gouzenko to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

⁷² The Bureau determined that Morros was not fully truthful in these early activities. See Memo, ... This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

Security - C to Espionage - R [the "R" was for Russian]. The new investigation took two parallel tracks. The first examined what the Sterns were doing at that time. The second sought to examine their past history, especially their activity with regard to the Boris Morros Music Company. The FBI sought to learn of and neutralize any current Soviet intelligence operations in which the Sterns might be involved and assess any damage they may have done through their earlier activities.

Microphones, wiretaps, and Dictaphones were employed. Mail covers were initiated on Alfred's office in Rockefeller Center, the Sterns' apartment in Manhattan, and their country home in Connecticut. The Bureau infiltrated informants into the Sterns' employ. Extensive physical surveillance was performed over the course of many years. Other government agencies, State Department, IRS, the Armed Forces, and, one would surmise, the CIA and NSA each provided information about the Sterns, their activities, and their acquaintances to the Bureau.⁷³ In short, the FBI employed many of those actions for which it came under heavy congressional and media criticism thirty years later by the Church and Pike Committees of 1975/76.

The investigation of the Sterns consisted of two distinct types of investigations: a counterintelligence investigation and a criminal one. From 1947 through early 1957, the Bureau concentrated on the counterintelligence investigation of the Sterns.⁷⁴ In March

⁷³ There is no direct notice in the Stern files that information came from either of these agencies. The presence of Venona decrypt information in the file means that NSA information about the Sterns certainly came to the Bureau. The subject matter and the information obtained about the Sterns' overseas activity suggests that the CIA was the likely source.

⁷⁴ Whereas the first twelve serials of the Stern File covered a period from 1941 to June 1947, the next 100 serials covered only the next 4 months. In all, the bulk of the Stern headquarters file during initial counterintelligence investigation (from June 1947

1952, the Bureau first began to consider submitting MOCASE to the Justice Department for possible prosecution of its subjects.⁷⁵ Several factors prevented the Bureau from successfully arresting all of the MOCASE subjects simultaneously in 1953 when Justice first considered prosecution. The initial preparation of criminal cases against the MOCASE subjects did not begin until the fall of 1956, nine years after the CI investigation began. The next chapter deals with these decisions.

The effort in time and resources expended by the Bureau during this case was large. Agents and support personnel in the New York Field Office maintained the Bureau's technical surveillance on the Sterns' home in Lewisboro, NY, their apartment in New York City, and Alfred's office at Rockefeller Plaza, NY. Many more agents and support personnel pursued the many investigative leads arising out of the case. Bureau personnel followed numerous leads in Chicago, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Richmond, and New Haven, Connecticut. Investigations were carried out in Canada, Mexico, France, Puerto Rico, and other areas outside the continental United States. The Bureau developed many informants, some of whom were paid for their information. At times, Bureau agents routinely followed the Sterns, bugged their hotel rooms and train compartments when they traveled, and from time to time, checked the contents of their garbage and or luggage.

until the Bureau first considered prosecuting the subjects of MOCASE in March of 1952) consists of more than 700 serials, thousands of pages.

⁷⁵ This is not to say that the Department was entirely unaware of the activities of the Bureau. Within a week of Morros's interview, Director Hoover had written the Attorney General for authority to institute several wiretaps in connection with the investigation. The wording of Hoover's request suggests that the Attorney General was briefed on Morros' revelations.

Given the state of telecommunications it took the Bureau time to put in place each piece of this extensive net over the Sterns' lives. Agents interviewed Morros on the 14th, 16th, and 18th of July. The Director received teletypes or Airtels [Air telegrams] of the significant facts developed during each interview. Even so, Ladd's summary did not reach Hoover for three days after the last of these. When the summary did reach Hoover's desk, the Director immediately sent teletypes to Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. He ordered reports on Jack Soble, Mary [sic] Soble, Alfred Stern, Martha Stern and an unidentified third person. Hoover required that all pertinent investigative leads were to be assigned and "all logical discreet investigation" be carried out. By the time these letters were mailed several more days had passed.

At the same time, Hoover sought authority from the Attorney General to institute technical surveillance [tesur] on Alfred Stern, Jack Soble, and [name withheld] because each was "deeply implicated in Soviet intelligence work within the United States." The Attorney General gave his affirmative and Headquarters drafted letters asking the New York Telephone Company to supply the "usual commercial rates leased line facilities" for the use of the Bureau. On July 25, Headquarters sent these letters to the New York Field Office for the telephone company. It had taken almost two weeks to mobilize the investigation of the Sterns and the other subjects in MOCASE.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ 100-57453, serials 14 -19. Although several of the dates are withheld on these serials the context and other serials clearly place them between July 21 and July 25, 1947. By the end of the MOCASE investigation at least the following individuals were major subjects: Boris Morros, Jack Soble, Myra Soble, Robert Soblen, Alfred Stern, Martha Dodd Stern, Jane Foster Zlatovski, George Zlatovski, Mark Zborowski, Ilya Wolston, Jacob Albam, Henry Spitz, and Beatrice Spitz. Dozens of minor investigations were also sparked by the FBI's renewed interest in the Sterns.

Within days, the Bureau added Martha as a subject of MOCASE due to her reported role in the BMMC and the Soble spy ring. The Bureau dug deeply into the Sterns' past to discern their intelligence activities and contacts. Headquarters ordered New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco to pay particular attention to the business contacts of the subjects. Headquarters wanted to know if they were used as cover firms for Soviet intelligence and whether interlocking directorates were used to disguise this activity.

While the Sterns lived in Manhattan, New York remained the office of origin for the case. All aspects of the investigation were coordinated through the New York office and it maintained the most complete file on the investigation. Headquarters, though, oversaw the entire effort, provided liaison with the Department of Justice for matters like surveillance authority, and approved any non-routine matters suggested by the field. Headquarters also coordinated the dissemination of information about the case to other field offices, Congress, and other government agencies, provided advice and criticism (neither always welcome), acted as a check on the dissemination of errors from one field office to another due to carelessness or bad information, and coordinated the Bureau-wide resources needed to pursue the investigation.

New York made its first report within days of Hoover's call for information about the MOCASE subjects. Alfred, NY reported, was currently vice-president and treasurer of a company called the Trade Development Corporation.⁷⁷ Company papers listed an Alfred J. Van Tassell as President. New York also noted some new information about Martha Stern. The FOIA release withheld this information as classified; given the file

⁷⁷ The date is July but the day is obscured by a redaction made during FOIA processing. The classification, though, remains puzzling.

designation listed on the redacted page, the item reported concerned passport matters.⁷⁸

Information in the serial suggests the redacted material was related to Martha's problems getting a passport to go to the Russian front with Bill as reporters in 1941.

On August 5, New York reported the successful installation of the tesurs on Alfred's office and Jack Soble's apartment. Both bugs were to be handled through "Sutec;" the context of the reference suggests that this was a facility to centralize wiretap monitoring handled by the NY office.⁷⁹ The wiretap on the Sterns' Lewisboro home presented several difficulties. Although the home was geographically in Lewisboro, NY, the telephone service and mailing address for the property, as noted earlier, came under the jurisdiction of the town of Ridgefield, New York. Because the home was in the jurisdiction of the New Haven office, New Haven would normally have handled the installation of the wiretap. Within hours, a decision was made that New York was told to handle the wiretap and the Attorney General's permission was obtained to make the arrangements.⁸⁰

Compiling all of the information gathered by several Field Offices to date, New York reported again on August 6. Boris Morros, an agent wrote, said he had agreed to set up the Boris Morros Music Company with Alfred Stern to provide cover for espionage

⁷⁸ The file number for the withheld material is 40-49548-4. "40" class files concern passport and visa matters.

⁷⁹ Given the Bureau's use of terms like misur, tesur, etc., it may be surmised that SUTEC was short for Surveillance Technology, or some form thereof.

⁸⁰ 100-57453, serials 22 to 24. New Haven, though, appears to have handled some other tesurs on the Ridgefield residence. This may have been due to the technological limitations at the time. This is not clear since early evaluations of the property suggested that certain types of tesur would be impractical since there was nowhere for an agent to monitor the surveillance.

activities under the supervision of Vasilli Zarubin. Martha was fully aware of these arrangements. When Zarubin left in 1944, all these activities were placed under the control of Jack Soble. Although the company was later liquidated by Morros, the agent stated, "it appears that SOBLE is continuing his efforts to associate MORROS in some other business enterprise with STERN or other individuals to be used for undercover espionage activities."⁸¹

Headquarters was not pleased with the report. Hoover wrote, "to point out the following inaccuracies, errors, and misconceptions." Where the agent claimed [Morros] told the Bureau that the BMMC was to provide cover Soviet espionage, the Bureau noted that "this ...is absolutely inaccurate." "All that ...[Morros] has yet reported is that Zarubin attempted to arrange for the operation of a cover company." Although the Bureau clearly believed this to be true, Morros had not yet claimed that the BMMC was a conspiracy to commit espionage. Hoover noted other errors too, but the first was the most significant." All offices receiving copies of this letter [were] instructed to make the appropriate notations on the reports ...in order that they [would] not in the future be made the basis for inaccurate statements and conclusions."

Within a matter of weeks, the official description of the Boris Morros Music Company changed. It now included the statement that an informant [Morros] said that Zarubin told [Morros] in April 1943 that he was to employ five or six Soviet agents in his company. Eight months later, Zarubin took [Morros] to meet the Sterns. Zarubin insisted that [Morros] take Stern in, train him, and turn the company over to him. "The informant and Stern could reach no agreement concerning the operation of the firm as a

⁸¹ 100-57453-27X1.

cover company."⁸² Had the agent who wrote the August 6 report been delayed in submitting it, his error would have corrected itself.

Although Martha did not appear to be a significant concern in the summary report described above, she quickly became as important a subject as Alfred. An August 26 letter from the Washington [D.C.] Field Office summarized Martha's book, Through Embassy Eyes. The author quoted in full Martha's six conclusions about Russia and noted her discussion of the underground resistance in the book. Copies of pictures taken of Martha and her family that appeared in the book were forwarded to the Bureau. No effort was made to interpret the material and at least one pertinent passage was left out of the report: Martha's instruction in the capabilities and methods of Nazi intelligence by Diels.⁸³

In September 1947, New York agents reported Martha's public defense of her father's legacy against charges by Edward Flynn, a former supporter of President Roosevelt. Flynn charged that Roosevelt had appointed the wrong Dodd. He argued that the President intended to call a Princeton professor with a similar name, not the University of Chicago professor sent to Germany. Westbrook Pegler, an anticommunist pundit, picked up Flynn's claim and amplified it. In his column in the September 24, 1947 New York Journal American, Pegler repeated Flynn's charge. The next day he amplified it, claiming that Roosevelt's mistake placed a second Soviet ambassador in Berlin. Furthermore, he continued, the apple did not fall far from the tree, Martha, Alfred, and

⁸² Letter, 9/3/1947, New Haven to Director for the information of the Richmond and Boston Field Offices. The name of the informant, Morros, is withheld under a [b7D] exemption.

⁸³ Letter, August 26, 1947, Washington [D.C.] Field Office to Director, 100-57453-39X16.

the Bill Dodd had each been cited by the House Committee on Un-American Activities for dozens of subversive connections.⁸⁴

Martha took great offense at the attack on her father's reputation, and by implication hers and Bill's. She quickly marshaled evidence to refute Pegler and Flynn. She wrote the Library of Congress and asked them to check her father's papers for correspondence to and from Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, and others involved in the choice of Dodd for ambassador. He then solicited the support of Eleanor Roosevelt (whose column had also repeated Flynn's account). Eleanor Roosevelt apologized on November 18 in her column, but Flynn and Pegler did not.⁸⁵ Pegler even repeated the story several years later when commenting on the Sterns' flight east in 1957.

Between the time that Alfred, Jack Soble, and Boris Morros, were observed together in Los Angeles in 1944, a great change had occurred in the American approach to counterintelligence. The focus during World War II had, not surprisingly been on the Axis powers. Although the FBI took periodic interest in the USSR and its agents, the Bureau made few comprehensive efforts to determine the scope of Soviet intelligence efforts or to thwart them at the time.⁸⁶ Duties stretched the Bureau's resources as it handled not only all domestic counterintelligence and counterespionage but also all non-military intelligence collection in the Western Hemisphere during World War II. Under these conditions, Martha and Alfred Sterns' connections to Soviet intelligence escaped

⁸⁴ New York Journal American, 9/24/1947; New York Journal American, 9/25/1947, 100-57453-A Pegler, 25 Sep 47

⁸⁵ New York World Telegram, 11/18/1947, clipping in FBI Report, New York, 12/11/1947, 100-57453-154.

⁸⁶ i.e., the COMRAP case.

serious notice. Even their public activism raised little concern. This changed in July 1947 for reasons that are described in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

In Gideon's Army: Soviet Intelligence and Domestic Politics, 1947-1949

As the in-depth examinations of the Sterns' pasts progressed, the Bureau worried that Martha and Alfred might still be involved in espionage. Initial evidence from the FBI wiretaps and other types of surveillance suggested they might still be agents, and worse, might be acting as agents of influence, i.e. foreign agents who work undercover to influence the actions of an enemy target, to Henry Wallace, a former vice president of the United States. This chapter details the Sterns' lives in the context of the active counterintelligence investigation against them between the years of 1947 and 1949. During this time, Alfred and Martha played an active role in the creation of the Progressive Party movement behind Henry Wallace, were dropped by Soviet intelligence as active agents, and acted like agents-of-influence to Wallace, all under the watchful eyes of the FBI.

Like Agents of Influence

On the night of August 11, 1947, agents monitoring the Stern telephones overheard Martha and Alfred planning to send a message to Paris via their friend, Ignace Zlotowski, a Polish national employed by the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. A subcommittee of the House Committee on Un-American Activities later

named Zlotowski as a Soviet agent.¹ The FBI's reporting agent surmised that Jack Soble was the intended recipient of the letter. At that time, he was running a pig bristle factory in France, a firm he had bought with Soviet funds.

Usually Alfred would have a secretary type his letters; Stern was a poor typist, unlike Martha. In this case, though, he handled the matter himself. The Bureau listened in as the Sterns recreated the letter's content in a kind of double talk so that Alfred could make another copy of the letter already mailed:

A: J--- I was thinking of making a copy [of the letter] and I didn't.

M: Uh, huh, okay unless you'd like me to - you know the reason we sent it... [unless otherwise noted, the ellipsis in original indicates Martha let her sentence trail off, not that I have elided parts of the conversation].

A: Yeah.

M: Unless you'd like to write it down briefly what I did...

... [author's ellipsis]

A: Uh, huh, well now let's see oh, yeah, about the --- (Ind.)

M: You can call it a business trip.

A: Wait a minute, yeah, wait a minute...

M: Very confidential...

A: Yeah, and...

M: His friend...

A: Huh?

M: His friend...

A: Yes.

M: His friend

¹ The New York Times, 4/20/1948, p.55; House Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, 81st. Congress, 1st. Session, March 31 and April 1, 1949, Documentary Testimony of Gen. Izyador Modelski, Former Military Attache of the Polish Embassy, Washington, D.C. Modelski identified Zlotowski as an atomic scientist and claimed he was involved in atomic espionage.

A: Yes
M: Not ours...

A: Uh, huh.
M: And the other one temporarily postponed...

The Sterns appear purposefully vague in this discussion of the purpose, contents, and recipient of their letter over the telephone.² The context suggests that they did not want Alfred's secretary or their household staff to overhear them; they do not appear concerned that their phone might be (and was) tapped.

Alfred met Zlotowski the next day at a New York hotel before the Pole was to fly to Europe. He gave him the letter, but Zlotowski did not find the intended recipient in France at the time. He returned the letter when he joined the Sterns, the Henry Wallaces, and others for a weekend at the Lewisboro home.³ The Bureau never learned the identity of the intended recipient. Agents thought it important, though, because of the way the Sterns had discussed the letter and the fact that Alfred had used an East Bloc national to personally deliver a letter, about which the Sterns did not want anyone else to know.

At one point in its investigation, the FBI thought it might have solved the puzzle as to the letter's intended recipient. In a teletype to Headquarters, SAC Scheidt expressed concern that the letter mentioned by Alfred was related to conversations that had been overheard while monitoring Myra Soble. A "*Roman Paren*" (the Bureau was not sure whether Roman or Paren was the surname) contacted Myra with a message: "it seems

² FBI File 100-57453, serials 30 to 30X1. Martha tended to be more wary of surveillance, but they did not truly suspect that they were being listened to by the Bureau for several years.

³ This weekend is described in detail below.

everything is going apart."⁴ This cryptic warning was assumed to be from Jack Soble who was in Europe at the time. The Bureau does not appear to have ever made the connection between *Roman Paren* and Jack Soble's brother, Robert Soblen [the two used different spellings of their name], who was code named ROMAN in the Venona transcripts.

The New York Field Office wondered if the Sterns had addressed the letter to Jack Soble as part of a system whereby they sought to warn Jack Soble of potential problems. Expediting delivery of the letter through Zlotowski suggested the Sterns' earnestness in sending their message. New York proposed immediate work on identifying Roman and wondered if the recent headlines in New York papers concerning the Silvermaster Case were causing concern to the subjects.⁵ New York surmised that the above matters probably had a mundane explanation and simply referred to personal problems of the subjects.⁶

The Bureau's interest in Zlotowski and his relationship to the Sterns was further heightened when foreign intelligence appeared to intersect with domestic politics. On August 26, 1947, the SAC of the New Haven office wrote the Bureau of the developing plans for a party the Sterns were to host at their Lewisboro home the weekend of August 30 and 31, 1947. Most, if not all, on the guest list were wealthy or politically important,

⁴ At this time, October 1947, the Bureau was unaware that Robert Soblen's cover name for many years was ROMAN. How they learned this is not yet known. The individual called Roman warning Myra was likely her brother-in-law, Robert.

⁵ The Silvermaster spy ring consisted of a number of young New Dealers employed throughout the government during the 1930's and 1940's. See footnote 263, p.130.

⁶ FBI Teletype, SAC Scheidt (NY) to Director, date withheld (b)(1), i.e. it is classified, Alfred K. Stern, et al., 100-57453-34X.

and often both. All were fellow travelers, Communists, or noted liberals. The list included:⁷

- Miodrag Marcovic, the Yugoslavian Embassy Consul;
- Lillian Hellman - playwright and fellow traveler;
- Paul Robeson - singer and fellow traveler;
- Frederick Field - "a socially prominent figure in diplomatic circles and a secret Communist;"⁸
- Leopold Stokowski - a concert pianist
- C. B. Baldwin - a former New Dealer under Wallace in the Department of Agriculture and leader in the Progressive Citizens of America;
- Ignace Zlotowski - Polish national described above;
- Paul Trilling - fellow traveler, New York intellectual, and author;
- Dr. J. Raymond Walsh - a noted economist, CIO leader, and radio commentator;
- Margaret Bourke-White - noted photographer and fellow-traveler;
- a publisher from India who was a friend of Margaret Bourke-White's;
- Joe Katz;
- Louis Gimbel, a Chicago businessman;
- the Warburgs, a wealthy couple from a distinguished Chicago family;
- Michael Straight - the editor of *The New Republic* and a Communist with connections to Soviet intelligence through the Cambridge 5.

And most significantly:

- Henry and Ilo Wallace - the former vice-president and his wife whose property Farvue was about three miles from the Stern's Lewisboro property.

Gimbel, the Warburgs, Stokowski, and Straight declined the invitation; the rest attended.⁹

The party proceeded without successful Bureau penetration.

Although the FBI never learned the purpose of the party, it was clear that an influential mix of cultural and political power gathered at the Sterns' home. Given the

⁷ The initial information about the party came from a letter of Martha's that was probably opened by the Bureau or the Post Office.

⁸ John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p.202.

⁹ FBI File100-57453, Serials 36X, 40X, and 41X4.

timing of the party and the role most of the invitees would play in Henry Wallace's campaign in 1948, topics of discussion surely included the issue of a possible third party,¹⁰ the role Wallace might play in it, and the role the Communist left was to play in post-War American politics. Many of the invitees played leadership roles in the far-left alternative to Americans for Democratic Action.¹¹ The presence of a Zlotowski, a possible intelligence agent, and Martha and Alfred, known intelligence agents, had made this a party for the FBI to watch.¹² Over the next two years, the FBI would watch as the Sterns' influence over Wallace waxed and waned.

At this time, ironically, the Sterns found their connections to Soviet intelligence were diminishing. In 1945, the defection of Igor Guzenko and revelations of Elizabeth Bentley, caused serious breaches in the various Soviet intelligence networks. Between 1946 and 1947, the Sterns lost effective contact with Soble, who was primarily in Europe at the time, and so were on their own, except, perhaps in the Inter American Pharmaceutical Company matter with Jack's brother, Robert. By the end of September 1947, the Sterns had become so impatient with the silence from their former case officer that they tried to contact him.

¹⁰ This party was not named the Progressive Party until the spring of 1948, several months after Wallace became its standard bearer.

¹¹ The largest difference between the Progressive Party and the ADA was that the latter was strongly anticommunist.

¹² Margaret Bourke-White and Lillian Hellman, at the time of the party were subjects of closed Internal Security - C cases. Paul Robeson was the subject of an active one. Michael Straight was an old Communist, whose connections with the Cambridge Five espionage ring and subsequent revelations clearly suggest that he was at least a Soviet intelligence agent during the thirties and forties. He appears to have been much like the Sterns, full of promise, lacking in achievement.

On September 29, 1947, the FBI overheard Martha talking to Alfred. "You don't want to call that old friend of ours again, do you?" she said. Alfred replied, "Sure, tonight." They did not reach him that night, but reached his wife Myra two weeks later. Myra was not happy that Alfred had called; not only had he woken her up, but she was reticent about talking to him on the telephone. Myra had good reason to be suspicious as the FBI was tapping the line, but she did not know this at the time. Alfred told Myra that he had called a number of times the previous weekend but no one answered. He was especially interested in learning when Jack was to return from Europe because he wanted to talk to Soble. Myra told Alfred that Jack would be away for at least another month; Soble was running both his pig bristle business and several intelligence assets including Jane Foster and George Zlatovski in Europe.

Alfred tried calling Myra back at the end of October and found Jack still away. When he suggested that he and Myra get together, Myra declined.¹³ Calling again several weeks later, Alfred renewed his proposal that he and Myra meet. He was to run an ALP meeting at a public school near Myra and suggested she attend the meeting and join him for coffee or a drink afterwards. Myra did not show up at the meeting; there is no way to tell if she simply skipped the meeting or detected the FBI's interest in the meeting. Stern continued to try to meet with Myra and contact Jack through her.

Alfred finally reached Soble in the spring of 1949 after trying for almost a year and a half. The two agreed to meet on March 2, 1949 around 7:30 p.m. in New York City. After the meeting, Stern called Martha and complained that it was the "same old

¹³ FBI Report, New York, 28 October 1947, 100-57453-111.

merry-go-round."¹⁴ Weinstein says that the Sterns turned to Valentin Sorokin in 1948 with the hope of getting back into intelligence work. Sorokin placed them under a man named Kostrov who assigned them to report on public figures that they knew or could meet. Martha, though, fell ill and Alfred found himself occupied with the problems of the American Labor Party. They failed and the NKVD dropped them as assets, briefly reconsidering the decision in 1956.¹⁵

Despite Martha's promise as a younger woman, she and Alfred were poor clandestine assets. This does not mean that they were not valuable to the Soviets, instead, their value came in their role as fellow travelers. As prominent leftists and supporters of left-wing causes, the Sterns aided the Soviets in a number of ways. First, they helped the Soviets identify potential agent recruits who would better suited to espionage and other secret intelligence activities. Furthermore, Martha could be counted on to aid the interests of the Soviets without guidance or recognition and she could be counted to guide Alfred to do the same. As the Sterns' interests and ideas coincided with those the USSR was promulgating, their activities usually aided Soviet propaganda efforts and other means by which the USSR sought to sway U.S. opinion or public policy.

¹⁴ FBI File 100-57453, Serials 111, 154, 201 and 227. Although the conversation snippets and transcripts are ambiguous considering the past relationship between the Sterns and the Sobles and its focus, espionage, it is difficult not to interpret Alfred's actions as anything less than an attempt to work themselves back into more active work for the Soviets.

¹⁵ Allen Weinstein and Alexei Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America (New York: Random House, 1999), p.69.

Gideon

When Martha and Alfred's close connections to Henry Wallace were noted in August 1947, the Bureau worried that they might be acting as agents. An agent-of-influence surreptitiously influences a significant person in an enemy country to form policy or to make an action according to the goals of a foreign intelligence service. Martha and Alfred acted much like agents-of-influence in their relationship to the former veep. The difference, though, lay in that they did not act in the service of a foreign intelligence service. Although the Sterns maintained several connections with intelligence agents or potential agents like Ignace Zlotowski, Miodrag Markovic, and Valentin Sorokin even while aiding Wallace, their role in Wallace's life and campaign from 1947 through 1949 had no support from the NKVD.

Even without Soviet support, Martha and Alfred swayed Wallace to espouse ideas and to take other actions that would, ultimately, be in the best interest of the USSR. In doing so, they played a significant part in turning Wallace's campaign so far to the left that it was labeled a communist front, an entirely accurate charge. While associated with the Sterns, Wallace's position and importance in American politics declined precipitously. The FBI paid close attention to all of this as there was certainly probable cause for the extensive surveillance of the Sterns even as it crossed the lines of foreign intelligence and, unavoidably, touched upon U.S. domestic politics.¹⁶ The point where these two areas intersected was the Sterns' role in the Wallace campaign

¹⁶ It would also have created a public relations nightmare had the Bureau's actions been made public.

One of the first things the Bureau learned was that the friendship between the Sterns and the Wallaces had only recently developed. Martha had met the Wallaces at a dinner she attended with her father in the mid-1930's while Dodd was ambassador and Wallace, the Secretary of Agriculture. In 1945, she and Wallace exchanged copies of their recent books, Sowing the Wind in Martha's case, Sixty Million Jobs in Wallace's, but did not become any closer at that time. Intriguingly, Alfred met the vice-president around 1944 in the company of Boris Morros and [name withheld]; the FBI file that contains this note provided no other detail concerning the meeting, its purposes, or what, if anything followed from it.¹⁷

In the summer or fall of 1946, Martha initiated a correspondence with Wallace. She wrote him expressing her admiration for his stand on the issues of the day.¹⁸ She followed this letter soon afterwards with one to his wife, Ilo. It was through this contact that the two couples began to become close to each other as the women's relationship deepened from that of pen pals to close friends by the summer of 1947. Soon the four were sharing dinners, weekends, and tennis matches. Martha's friendship with Ilo provided the anchor for the relationship between the Sterns and the Wallaces. Over the course of this friendship, the Sterns became confidants and political advisors to Wallace. Some evidence suggests that this was planned by Martha and Alfred, although such a conclusion is far from conclusive.

¹⁷ On the exchange of books see Letter, Henry Wallace to Martha Dodd, 9/17/45, Henry Wallace Papers Microfilm, University of Iowa, roll 36, frame 759. The rest comes from the Stern File.

¹⁸ FBI Report, New Haven, 2/8/1950, 100-57453-423.

Even before the FBI learned of the relationship, it appears that Martha and Alfred were acting as self-anointed agents-of-influence to Henry Wallace. In April 1947, Wallace planned a trip to Europe to examine the post-war situation and to speak on the issues of the day. Wallace's vocal opposition to the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and Truman's loyalty program had recently cemented his divorce from the Democratic Party and his wedding with far-left. The final split visibly emerged during his trip to Europe in the spring of 1947. The Sterns played an important role in this trip and the public relations disaster it became for Wallace.

Wallace first traveled to the British Isles. In England, Wallace violated an unspoken commandment: Thou shalt not criticize thy country's foreign policy while abroad. While Wallace's call for a "century of the common man" reverberated with some, his criticism of the Truman Doctrine angered many.¹⁹

By the time Wallace left France, the trip had become a distinct liability. The organizer of the French leg of Wallace's tour was Pierre Cot, a friend of Martha's since her years in Germany. French politician, Cot was a secret Communist and a sometime Soviet spy. Wallace was greeted by a largely communist delegation further destroying his liberal credentials back home. The Sterns helped to organize this leg of Wallace's trip and were later blamed for its failure by Wallace's then boss, Michael Straight, editor The New Republic.

Before Wallace left for Europe, Martha and Alfred had written their friend Cot, telling him to make sure Wallace was greeted "in the name of a broad welcoming committee." In a concurrent letter to Wallace, Martha and Alfred urged him to accept

¹⁹ John C. Culver and John Hyde, American Dreamer: A Life of Henry Wallace (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2000), p.440.

Cot's invitation. Cot immediately sent a telegram inviting Wallace to come to France. The former vice-president would be welcomed, Cot wrote, by a group composed of himself, Jacques Duclos, Leon Blum, and Leon Journaux, a group of "preeminent liberal people."²⁰ Duclos was the head of the French Communist Party, Blum was a fellow-traveler and former head of the Popular Front government in late 1930's France, and Journaux was another communist; the group was certainly not liberal. Straight claimed that the moderate political elements that had previously signed on to sponsor Wallace abandoned him and his welcome to France was left in the hands of fellow travelers and Communists. To Straight's feigned surprise, Wallace "had chosen to walk into the trap," i.e. the Communist-run welcome.²¹ It is clear from Cot's telegram, though, that the expected welcome was in the hands of fellow travelers and Communists from the beginning; Straight's account was inaccurate; even though he had broken with the Party in the late 1930's, he was not an innocent naïf unable to recognize communists.

²⁰ Telegram, Cot to Wallace, Henry Wallace Papers, University of Iowa, roll 43, frame 54.

²¹ In After Long Silence (New York; W. W. Norton Co., 1983), pp.214-223, Michael Straight portrays himself as an anticommunist, liberal who tried unsuccessfully to convince Wallace that Communists are behind the PCA and its push for Wallace to embrace a third party. He traveled with Wallace to both Europe and Palestine and spent much time with him during the summer, fall, and winter of 1947 while Wallace considered his political future. He publicly rejected Wallace's candidacy and the New Republic supported Truman in the campaign. Afterward Wallace's defeat. Straight says Wallace told him how he had finally learned the extent of Communist infiltration in his party and how it disgusted him. Weinstein notes that Straight was involved with Soviet espionage until the Nazi-Soviet Pact, but then broke with the Party [Weinstein and Vassiliev, Haunted Wood, pp.72-83, 220]. In his editorial of 1/19/1948 for The New Republic (pp.22-23), though, Straight dismissed concerns about communist influence behind a third party movement and stated that his only concern is that "progressive" forces not split in the 1948 congressional campaigns or they would lose the handful of radical members in congress that the far-left could claim.

This was not Straight's only distortion. In concluding his account of Wallace's trip, Straight claimed that it was not until 1981 that he learned who the Sterns were or that they had been accused of spying and had fled to Czechoslovakia. The evidence suggests that it is impossible Straight did not know the Sterns and very unlikely that he had forgotten who they were. Straight and the Sterns were part of a small group that helped Wallace decide whether to run for president and whether to run on a third-party ticket. Straight does not name the Sterns, but he notes that the others were Beanie Baldwin, Clark Foreman, and Paul Robeson. At least Baldwin and Robeson were close friends of the Sterns. As seen earlier, the Sterns invited Straight to stay the weekend with Wallace and, a number of close acquaintance if not friends to a weekend get-together. The Sterns and Straight shared common friends, both had connections to Soviet intelligence, and would have encountered each other frequently during 1947.

Wallace returned home at the end of April 1947, a diminishing force in American politics. His national, Democratic support dropped from 24% in December 1946 to 9% after his trip. Although he remained a Democrat, Wallace hoped that by speaking out he could pull his Party leftward and away from the war into which he thought Truman would lead the U.S. For Wallace, the preeminent issue was peace. If Truman did not adopt a similar commitment to peaceful-coexistence with the Soviets, Wallace would consider running as an independent.

Wallace spent the summer unconcerned about his declining polls. He returned to his post as editor of The New Republic. He hoped, in part, to use it as a launching pad to press for his vision of peace. Meanwhile others began the work of crafting a third party and worked to place Wallace at its head. The Progressive Citizens of America [PCA]

formed the base of this effort. C. B. Baldwin, a friend of Alfred Stern and leader in the PCA, worked through the summer to convince Wallace to head the party. Wallace remained aloof from the efforts on his behalf and continued to speak as if he would remain in the Democratic Party. Dr. Frank Kingdon, nationally known radio commentator, worked to keep Wallace on this path.²²

For two years after leaving the government, Wallace had acted as a magnet for many on the far-left of the Democratic Party. Remnants of the New Deal coalition of Roosevelt hoped that Wallace could rally the "progressives" and liberals of the country to oppose the more centrist Truman. The far left especially looked to Wallace because he did not embrace Truman's policies regarding Europe and the Soviet Union.

A number of leftist groups formed around Wallace because of his views. The Progressive Citizens of America [PCA] was formed in the winter of 1946 by the merger of two far-left groups, the National Citizens Political Action Committee (a CIO-PAC offshoot) and the Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions [ASP] headed by Stern friend, sculptor Jo Davidson. Both groups had a large number of fellow travelers, socialists, Communists, and assorted leftists. The two groups came together after a Wallace speech at the Hotel Commodore (an event attended by the Sterns). Kingdon, was named co-chairman of the new group along with Stern friend, sculptor Jo Davidson of the ASP. Other Stern friends in the leadership of this group included C. B. Baldwin and Hannah Dörner.

The PCA emerged in opposition to the recently formed Americans for Democratic Action [ADA], an organization formed by Eleanor Roosevelt, Walter Ruether, Arthur

²² Culver and Hyde, American Dreamer, pp.439-458.

Schlesinger, Sr., and other prominent liberals of the day. ADA sought to provide an anticommunist, liberal counter to an increasingly conservative Democratic Party. Both groups claimed the mantle of Roosevelt and the tradition of the New Deal. The PCA accepted the support of Communists (actually, Communists and fellow travelers were active throughout the party). The ADA rejected Communist participation. Wallace strongly supported the PCA and the group reciprocated.

Throughout the summer of 1947, forces in the PCA pressed Wallace to fight for the mantle of Roosevelt in the Democratic Party. They eschewed the creation of third party, arguing that it would split the liberal vote and elect a Republican president. Kingdon was a staunch supporter of this tact and was Wallace's closest advisor from that side of the forces pulling Wallace. Wallace followed this path, though willing to consider running as an independent, he was not a staunch supporter of the idea of a third party. He looked at the PCA as a tool to push Truman to the left, not as one to push himself towards the presidency.

This battle continued throughout the summer of 1947, but there is no evidence that the Sterns were involved in them.²³ At the end of August, of course, the Sterns held their party of friends and potential supporters. It was also in August that Wallace looked to the Sterns for advice concerning his plans to visit Palestine in September. Bureau agents overheard Alfred remark that he was a little surprised when Wallace brought the idea up but thought it was good one. Wallace wanted the Sterns' advice on the position he should take on the issue of Palestine. Alfred thought that arguing for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, might, in one way bring some Jewish support to his candidacy.

²³ The FBI bugs that provide so much of the evidence of the Stern's involvement were not installed until early August.

Wallace agreed and supported the creation of a Jewish state while touring kibbutz and Jewish communities in the Middle East. Although Wallace received strong criticism for his actions in Europe, his Palestinian trip raised few concerns as Wallace tended to talk agriculture.²⁴

Almost immediately after Wallace returned from the Middle East, Martha arranged a meeting between him and the Sterns' friend Ignace Zlotowski. The Sterns wanted Zlotowski to convince Wallace to include a discussion of bacteriological warfare in his attacks on the Truman Administration atomic energy policy.²⁵ Zlotowski did not appear too impressed by Wallace but was willing to present his information to him, but he was not willing to provide anything more than publicly available material to the former vice-president.

At the meeting, Zlotowski argued that bacteriological warfare could be as devastating as nuclear warfare. Given this, the Pole continued, it would follow that the Western powers would want to control worldwide access to it as much as to nuclear weapons. Because they did not, it followed that their only interest in nuclear control was to prevent the socialist world from developing peaceful uses of atomic energy and thereby competing with the capitalist markets. Wallace appeared interested in Zlotowski's arguments. Martha followed the meeting up with a note:

I am glad you were interested in Zlotowski's discussion of bacteriological warfare. I want to sum up our understanding of the essential factors involved...If bacteriological warfare is as destructive potentially as atomic warfare, why isn't it being discussed not only at UN but extensively in the press...

²⁴ Letter, SAC NY to Director, 9/16/1947, 100-57453-88. Culver and Hyde, American Dreamer, pp.453-4.

²⁵ FBI Letter, Director to SAC Gleason, New Haven, 9/22/1947, 100-57453-65.

Wallace used the argument in a speech he gave in Baltimore the next week.²⁶

Wallace's largest concern, though, was that any third party in which he became involved had to be a broad-based movement. He did not want it dominated by one area, i.e. New York, or by one ideology, i.e. communism. Wallace wanted a broad based party of the left, not a sectarian one. Alfred assured him that the PCA and ALP, the two groups pressing most strongly for a third party, were just the kind of broad based, left wing support Wallace wanted. Wallace remained undecided through the fall of 1947 and was repelled by the machinations made to push him one way or the other, but he did not reject the third party groups either.

The Sterns appeared to tack as Wallace did. One night Alfred complained to [name withheld] that "there is so G-- D----- much conniving now that it begins to be wheels within wheels." Martha and Alfred had close connections on both sides of the debate and embraced neither side for quite a while.²⁷ In public, Martha's and Alfred's position on Wallace and a third party appeared to be one of wait and see; they liked the idea of a third party, but wanted to maximize Wallace's influence in U.S. politics and weren't convinced a third party was the way to do that. By November they had become convinced that it was the correct way and began telling some close associates that "developments in the last couple of weeks" had changed their minds from supporting

²⁶ FBI Report, New York, 4/6/1949, 100-57453-333.

²⁷ Since these conversations were heavily redacted and the interlocutors of the Sterns are often unknown, it is impossible to map these intricate games over Wallace's candidacy with any surety. When the full conversations are released, they will be a valuable record of Wallace's struggles between 1947 and 1948. A pivotal time in the formation of Cold War America.

Wallace's continued membership in the Democratic Party.²⁸ Thereafter, the Sterns actively sought to convince Wallace of the value of a third party because they thought it "more imminent than ever." By December 1947, they actively lobbied Wallace to lead a third party. Stern told one person that he so wanted to give Wallace a push towards a new party that he had even "mentioned the naughty word a couple of times [to Wallace] when [he] apologized for talking about a third party."

Alfred explained to his interlocutor that he wanted to be sure Wallace understood three things. First, Thomas Dewey, the Republican candidate, was trying to play sections of the Democratic Party against each other. Second, the Democrats had no sincerity and did not deserve Wallace's loyalty. Third, "there must be a platform and a third party program." Wallace, too, wanted the Sterns' input and, according to Alfred, assured him that he would talk to Martha and Alfred prior to deciding which path he would take.²⁹ Three days after Alfred talked to Wallace, i.e. early December 1947, the former vice president decided to take his chances with the third party movement. Wallace formally announced his decision to run for president until December 29, 1947. He had actually made his final decision several weeks earlier but waited for the best circumstance to announce it publicly.

²⁸ These "developments" are never mentioned in the extant record of the Stern's lives at this time. It is my suspicion, from reading the FBI wiretap materials and other sources, that the Stern's may not have been candid with Wallace and some of his supporters about their views on the path Wallace should take. It is suggested through my narrative that they guided Wallace towards an acceptance of being a third party candidate even while they professed to be on the fence in the matter.

²⁹ FBI Intercept of phone call from Alfred Stern to [name withheld], 12/1/1947, 12:40 p.m. 100-57453-160.

Many of his longtime supporters were thrilled with his decision, but many others were disappointed. The subsequent actions of some of the disappointed hurt his cause. Frank Kingdon, co-chairman of the PCA, was the most significant. Kingdon had been the most vocal of Wallace's supporters arguing against a third party move; Kingdon especially worried about it because so many fellow travelers were behind the move. When Wallace announced to his supporters that he was going to fight with the third party movement, Kingdon renounced him and even began something of a public crusade against his former candidate.

Some historians have suggested that Kingdon broke with Wallace on account of his own ambition to be Senator of New Jersey and his need for the help of Frank Hague, head of the state Democratic machine; others have suggested that Kingdon had a drinking problem.³⁰ FBI files suggest a different interpretation. The debate for Kingdon had turned personal. He was blindsided by Wallace's decision and stopped supporting Wallace because he felt betrayed by the way it was made and even more, by the way it was announced to him.

Wallace first announced his decision at an informal meeting at Jo Davidson's studio in New York City on December 2.³¹ The news was then broken to Kingdon, Davidson's co-chair in the PCA. Kingdon did not believe the report he received and so on December 4, a second meeting was held at Davidson's to convince him to support Wallace's decision. Kingdon had previously supported the idea of an alternate to the

³⁰ Culver and Hyde, American Dreamer, pp.458-9.

³¹ Curtis MacDougall, Gideon's Army (New York: Marzani & Munsell, 1965), vol.1, p.229

Republicans and Democrats, but by November of 1947 had chilled to the idea.³² He had come to reevaluate Truman's chances, and appeared to fear that a third party and Wallace would be buried in a Truman victory.³³

Before Kingdon got to Davidson's, Wallace dictated a letter over the telephone to be given to Kingdon when he arrived. When Wallace's old supporter arrived, he was presented him the letter and those assembled began to argue with him. Kingdon was deeply "offended by what happened;" he felt that "eighteen people had mauled him and put him on the carpet and called him a leper and had - you know - really just gone to town on him."³⁴ The meeting degenerated as Kingdon yelled at C. B. Baldwin, "You're a liar. You wrote it. Henry Wallace never wrote like that."³⁵

Kingdon traveled to Farvue the next day, December 5, to confront Wallace. The Sterns, Henry Wallace, and Leonard Goldsmith, a labor organizer, were waiting. It was during this meeting that Kingdon told Wallace that he would need "a Gideon's Army" to be successful; apparently this is where the nickname for the Wallace campaign's origin.³⁶ Martha and Alfred soothed Kingdon's raw nerves and realigned him to Wallace over the course of an emotional battle. Kingdon returned to the Sterns' home to continue the discussion, which went on through the night. Around 2 a.m., December 6, they all went

³² Ibid., p.230-31.

³³ Ibid., p.231. This is not MacDougall's explanation, but is based on the events he related.

³⁴ Ibid., p.224-36. The quotes are from an intercepted telephone call from Wallace to Alfred Stern, 12/6/1947, 100-57453-160.

³⁵ MacDougal, Gideon's Army, vol.1, pp.234-5.

³⁶ Ibid., 235.

to a small inn near the Sterns' home for late night snacks. The discussions did not end until 7 a.m. that morning. Later that day, Wallace told Alfred that "You and Martha must have accomplished miracles." To Martha he said "it was very fortunate that you, Alfred and [Goldsmith] were able to soften him up a little because he certainly seems to appreciate it."³⁷

Kingdon did not remain mollified for long. Apparently, those who had been hostile to him continued to anger him and the brief truce Martha and Alfred had secured collapsed. In a letter to Wallace dated December 12, 1947, Martha told Wallace she was especially concerned because one of those involved in these discussions [about the new party], [Frank Kingdon], had written her a letter in a "frenzied tone" that was marked by a "pattern of Red Baiting."³⁸ Within a week of the letter, Kingdon quit the PCA. In doing so he argued that the lack of labor support, the impossibility of raising \$10 million, and the lack of organizational support from the ALP and CIO-PAC doom any third party attempt. He immediately began publicly attacking the idea of the third party, arguing that it was Communist inspired and Communist dominated. On December 29, Wallace announced his candidacy for president over Chicago radio. The Sterns' efforts to keep Kingdon on Wallace's side failed. The result was a public relations disaster as papers picked up Kingdon's denunciation of the third party and Wallace candidacy as a Communist front.

³⁷ FBI Intercepted phone call from Henry Wallace to Alfred Stern, 12/6/1947, 100-57453-160. Goldsmith's name was withheld but MacDougall clearly identifies him.

³⁸ The name was withheld in the FOIA release but the context indicates that it was Frank Kingdon about whom Martha wrote.

The Sterns avidly supported Wallace in his effort to run for president although, unbeknownst to Kingdon, they were a central part of the group of Communists and Communist sympathizers behind Wallace. Alfred raised funds, drafted policy papers on housing issues, and played a role behind the scenes in the friction and interplay between the three major groups that supported Wallace. He often worked to smooth out conflicts between the American Labor Party [ALP], the Progressive Citizens of America [PCA], and the Arts, Sciences and Professions [ASP] in New York, the three critical bases of Wallace's support.

Stern was deeply involved in various organizational policy debates, usually arguing Wallace's views. In one debate, Alfred tackled the problem of the PCA's New York City orientation. Although most of the party's money would come from New Yorkers, Alfred feared that if the party were perceived to be too New York centered, Midwest supporters of the party would reject it. For this reason, Alfred strongly pressed the party to hold its convention somewhere other than New York.³⁹ Wallace agreed. To distance the party from New York, its offices were set up in Chicago and it held its convention in Philadelphia.⁴⁰

Alfred also busied himself with the efforts to get the third party going and to find an adequate medium in order to get its message out. Stern and a small group of wealthy Wallace backers pursued the idea of publishing a weekly newspaper. The paper was to

³⁹ Taking advantage of certain economies-of-scale, the Progressives chose Philadelphia. The Republicans and Democrats had both held their conventions there and the facilities were already converted for political conventions. The Progressives saved a lot of money. On these matters see MacDougal, *Gideon's Army*, vol.2, p.485.

⁴⁰ The fact that the then-named Progressive Party could piggy-back its convention on those of the Republican and Democratic Party conventions also held in Philadelphia meant a large monetary savings and so was an important part of the decision too [Ibid.].

be independent of the third party, but attuned to its issues and concerns; in short, there was to be a fictitious separation between the two for the sake of "objectivity." Wallace approved of the idea but played little role in the creation of this newspaper.

In March 1948, Alfred and his partners first explored the idea of buying the weekly newsmagazine PM from Marshall Field. Field, though, refused to sell to the Wallace supporters. After failing to find someone to act as a shell buyer, Stern and his group approached other established papers to take over for the Party. Meanwhile the group also explored various funding schemes for the proposed paper. Stern at one point thought that selling \$10 subscriptions could raise \$500,000 for the effort. In May, at a small meeting, Stern and the others raised \$800,000 in pledges for the purchase and publication of the newspaper.⁴¹

In the end, a new periodical titled "The Guardian" was created as a weekly paper, organized and financed independently of the third party. The Trade Union News printed the paper, which debuted in June 1948. Culver and Hyde note that Norman Mailer, Cedric Belfrage, John T. MacManus, James Aronson, and Jess Gitt played important roles in the paper. Alfred's role was not mentioned, although the FBI transcripts clearly indicate he played a central role in the effort.⁴²

Martha played a less direct role in Wallace's campaign during the late months of 1947 and early months of 1948 than Alfred did. She spent much of the time caring for her adopted son, Bobby, who had a serious infection requiring injections of penicillin. Martha, too, became ill during this time. This domesticity brought Martha closer to Ilo

⁴¹ FBI Report, New York, 6/18/1948, 100-57453-278.

⁴² Culver and Hyde, American Dreamer, pp.497-8.

Wallace. She used this friendship to good effect as she sought to make Ilo Wallace amenable to Wallace's decision to run as an independent and to head a third party. Martha kept Ilo informed of the goings on in meetings. She also assured Ilo about some of those who sought to influence Wallace. When Ilo expressed concern about the two friends of the Sterns, Ignace Zlotowski and Miodrag Markovic, Martha said Markovic and Zlotowski were not Communists, they simply considered Wallace a "great man" and looked to him for leadership.⁴³

As Martha's and Bobby's health improved, Martha played a more important role as an advisor. In March 1948, she assigned a friend to prepare a memo on the events in Czechoslovakia for Wallace. She thought that the last person that Wallace had spoken to on the issue, [name withheld], had a "bad slant" on the events in Eastern Europe. Martha wanted her source to give Wallace evidence that the coup in Czechoslovakia was aimed towards instilling democracy in Czechoslovakia. Martha's efforts appear to have been successful. At a press conference two weeks later, Wallace "suggested the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia was in response to a right-wing plot to take over the government." Wallace further suggested that the defenestration of Jan Masaryk was a suicide caused by an illness like cancer or something similar. These off-hand remarks were not well received by the press or the public.⁴⁴

⁴³ FBI Report, New Haven, 2/8/1950, 100-57453-423. Martha first met Markovic in Fred Field's office, see 100-57453-333.

⁴³ FBI Letter, Director to SAC Gleason, New Haven, 9/22/1947, 100-57453-65.

⁴⁴ FBI Report, New York, 6/18/1948, 100-57453-278, p.15. On Wallace's press conference see Culver and Hyde, American Dreamer, p.473.

At the same time, Martha gathered information on the situation in Poland from Jan Galewicz, the Polish Consul in New York.⁴⁵ Besides presenting this information to Wallace, Martha made sure that Galewicz attended several events also attended by Wallace. These tended to be small gatherings attended by the Sterns, the Wallaces, and a handful of other leftist individuals.⁴⁶

Although less successful than her husband at getting donations to Wallace's cause, Martha also tried to raise funds. At one point, she called her ex-husband, George Basset Roberts. Half jokingly, she told him that although she did not want a ring when they were first married, she wanted one now. Actually, she continued, she wanted the cash equivalent as a donation to the Wallace campaign. Roberts joked back, "how would you feel if I asked you for a donation to Dewey's campaign?" He was a Republican and certainly no supporter of Wallace.⁴⁷

Unlike Roberts, Martha truly worried about a future under a Dewey or a Truman. She expressed an almost paranoid fear of dying in a nuclear war - not uncommon at that time. Martha linked this fear to "the stench of fascism" that she continued to detect in the United States. Although circumstances had changed since 1938, her comment suggests that she felt much the same about America in 1948 as she had upon returning home from

⁴⁵ Martha firmly told Ilo Wallace that Galewicz was not a Communist. How this squares with his serving as a diplomat for a then Communist nation was not answered in the conversation overheard from which the FBI gleaned this information. 100-57453-228.

⁴⁶ In setting up one of these weekend tennis matches/dinners for the Wallaces and Feng Yu-Shiang, a member of the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang with the rank of Marshall, Martha asked an unnamed person to suggest another guest, one who would be "politically correct" and who could play tennis since Marshall Feng did not [FBI Report, New York, 9/23/1948, 100-57453-295, p.159].

⁴⁷ FBI Report, New York, 4/6/1949, 100-57453-333

Germany ten years earlier. Although she does not make it clear, the things that suggested American fascism to her included: a capitalist economy; anti-communism; isolationism; racism; and opposition to far left political programs.⁴⁸

Her writing clearly expressed this as she began her first effort to write an article on the Harnacks in 1947 after receiving information about their careers and deaths from Arvid's nephew Falk Harnack and Arvid's mentor, Dr. Friedrich Lenz. Although she struggled to write a homage to her friend many times over the years, she never finished it.

Martha's passions did emerge in other literary efforts. She wielded her writing talents to spur Wallace on and to lift the spirits of the Progressive Party. Martha's jeremiads mixed strong, left and far left social/political action with large doses of praise for Wallace and her vision of his world-historical importance. For example, in July 1948, she wrote to Wallace that she missed the "spirit of confidence" the party had earlier that year. She realized that part of the problem was in giving in to the "reactionaries;" in doing this, "we have ...almost blacked out Roosevelt's record and the New Deal," she wrote. Martha exhorted Wallace to remember:

You are the heir, rightfully almost legally, certainly historically. You are here leading this new but typically American revolt against rotten parties ... You have all the qualifications for great leadership ... You are to continue in 1948 where the New Deal left off in 1938. The continuity of our real history and progress means Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt and Wallace.

Martha again wielded the language and legacy of her father as she pressed for her political and social goals, both those stated and those unstated.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Martha created no list of these hints of fascism, rather I derive it from her criticisms of America and certain Americans expressed in The Searching Light.

⁴⁹ FBI Report, New Haven, 2/8/1950, 100-57453-423. FBI Letter, Director to SAC Gleason, New Haven, 9/22/1947, 100-57453-65.

Impressed by Martha's prose and passion, Wallace asked her in August 1948 to write speeches for him. Martha consulted with Valentin Sorokin, Press Secretary of the Soviet Consulate in New York. She asked Sorokin for talking points to use in her work for Wallace. Sorokin advised Martha against accepting the position; why he did so, though, is not mentioned in the phone call. At the time, FBI wiretaps revealed that the Sterns still sought to re-involve themselves with Soviet intelligence and so Sorokin may have wanted them to keep a lower profile in their advocacy of leftist causes. This discussion, according to Weinstein, found its way into Martha's NKVD file. FBI listening devices recorded several conversations between the Sterns and Sorokin that support the claim that Martha discussed Wallace's request with the Soviet official.⁵⁰

Martha did not take Sorokin's advice and she immediately became involved in the crafting of Wallace's public messages. Wallace was scheduled to speak on August 12, 1948 and asked Martha to review his speech. In the draft, Wallace made several comments against "clericalism" aimed against the Catholic Church and its influence in labor politics.⁵¹ Martha, Alfred, and Vito Marcantonio expressed grave concern about these lines. Martha told Wallace they should be removed as she felt that he would do serious damage to his campaign if the speech remained as written. She pressed not only Wallace but also Ilo to ensure that changes were made. She wrote Ilo: "as long as Henry stays clear of the damned Communists and damned Catholics and holds his wonderful

⁵⁰ Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, p.67. Weinstein dismisses the Soviet report on Martha's claim that Wallace had asked her to write speeches for him. The circumstantial evidence suggests that he did ask her to be one of his speech writers, even if she were not his primary one.

⁵¹ Although it is not clear what Wallace was to say, it is safe to suggest that he was referring to the Catholic Church's staunch anti-Communism and its strength in labor in the United States, especially in the AFL.

line he should be O.K." Ilo assured her that the text of the speech had been changed and was not as bad as before.⁵²

Several persons complained to Wallace's biographers, John C. Culver and John Hyde, that Ilo was meddling in Wallace's political decisions through his secretary.⁵³ The evidence detailed above suggests that Ilo took a strong interest in Wallace's career and had some direct influence on him. Culver and Hyde also reported that Wallace's speechwriters resented Ilo's influence and thought her stupid. At the least, their animus suggests that Ilo talked politics with her husband. Wallace's speechwriters would ask of a new speech "whether Ilo will understand it." Martha may have been behind some of Ilo's "interference;" given a lack of evidence no conclusion may be made on this point.⁵⁴

The Sterns were also involved in Wallace's deliberations over a vice-presidential running mate. Martha liked the suggestion that Harry Bridges be chosen, but must have known that, not being a citizen, Bridges was ineligible. Practically, though, she leaned towards Florida Representative Glen Taylor, a staunch and radical New Deal supporter in

⁵² Culver and Hyde note that Wallace's speechwriters detested Ilo, thinking her stupid and meddling. Martha, on the other hand, cultivated her friendship and, at times, sought her help in getting things through to Wallace. Culver and Hyde misunderstand Ilo's interest in politics. She was interested and active (albeit behind the scenes), but in a manner that was aimed, first and foremost, at protecting her husband and his reputation, rather than at making a political point, or even winning an election.

⁵³ Culver and Hyde, American Dreamer, pp.496-7.

⁵⁴ It should also be noted that one of Wallace's major speechwriters was Tabitha Petran, a good friend of the Sterns. On Petran as a speechwriter see Note by M. Cooney re Teddy Petran, Henry Wallace Papers, Iowa Historical Society, roll 45, frame 67. On Petran's friendship with the Sterns see the several folders of correspondence between Petran and the Sterns in the Martha Dodd Papers, Library of Congress. Given Martha's role in Wallace's speeches, her friendship with Ilo and her friendship with Petran, one must suspect that there was more to the story that Ilo "interfered" than simply a nosy spouse.

Congress.⁵⁵ Wallace discussed the matter with both Sterns, although how important their influence in his decision is not clear. Taylor accepted the position of running mate to Wallace in March 1948 and avidly worked in Congress to press legislative ideas from Wallace and others including housing legislation drafted by Alfred Stern for the Wallace campaign.

Meanwhile, Alfred, Marcantonio, and Lillian Hellman were still trying to merge the ALP and the PCA in New York into one political organization. In one attempt in September 1948, Hellman sought the Progressive Party nomination to run for Congress. She lost to an ALP candidate. Wallace appears to have blamed her loss on Marcantonio and said that he had lost confidence in the New York Progressive Party. Wallace's doubts about Marcantonio had been building over the course of the campaign. As early as March of 1948, supporters of Wallace had considered Marcantonio a problem as he was thought to be most interested in his own career, not Wallace's. Still, the two remained allies through the November election and, through the liaison of Alfred, worked together for several months afterwards too.

In the fall, Alfred played a strong role in Marcantonio's campaign for re-election to Congress in 1948. Marcantonio's campaign began in earnest in September; the campaign season was blessedly shorter at that time. On the 13th, Alfred began contacting interested individuals to serve on the Committee to Re-Elect Vito Marcantonio; the meeting was held at the apartment of Fred Field. Marcantonio tapped Alfred to be his treasurer, and Stern also served on Marc's Steering Committee.⁵⁶ Alfred raised funds, ran

⁵⁵ FBI Report, New York, 4/6/1949, 100-57453-333

⁵⁶ In spite of his efforts on Marc's behalf, Alfred was unable to reenter the leadership of the ALP. In September, in the midst of his efforts on Marc's behalf, Alfred

meetings, sought the political support of various unions, and, when needed, ensured that advertisements proclaiming the famous and powerful supporters of Marc addressed the ethnic politics of Marcantonio's support. In one case, Stern sought a supporter with an Irish name, presumably to appeal to certain union interests because Marc's district was largely Puerto Rican and Italian. Martha did her share too, putting in late hours of clerical work at Marcantonio's campaign headquarters and arranging for a couple of "girls" to entertain "visiting firemen of [Harry] Bridge's union" who had come east to help organize Marc's campaign efforts.⁵⁷

Election night, November 2, found the Sterns at Wallace's home, Farvue, about three miles from the Sterns' house in Lewisboro. They awaited the election results with the candidate and his wife. When Wallace had begun his campaign the previous December, the Progressive Party estimated that Wallace would poll 10 million votes. Earlier that election day, Martha predicted that Marcantonio would win, incumbent congressman Leo Isaacson would lose, and Wallace would draw five to six million votes.⁵⁸ In the wake of Truman's victory over Dewey, Wallace received only a million or so votes, the same as Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat Party. It had been clear from the beginning that Wallace was not going to win the election, but those who supported the Progressive Party hoped a strong showing would make their effort into a political force with which to be reckoned. In the waning days of the campaign, the party had been

asked his friend to press for Stern's inclusion on the party's board. Marc refused, apparently thinking the time was wrong to launch such a fight. Alfred, apparently, understood Marc's reasoning as he amicably helped his friend for many years after this. [FBI Report, New York, 4/6/1949, 100-57453-333, p.149].

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.132.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.136.

telling its supporters to vote for Truman so that Dewey would not win, still, the voter's rejection of Wallace's far left, popular front type party showed how little political support the communist left actually had.

Although Stern thought that the election's real results would not be known for some time, i.e. how influential the "progressive" vote actually had been, he thought that Wallace's forces were instrumental in electing Truman. Alfred rationalized that the Wallace threat pulled Truman back from his rightward drift, forcing him to appeal to the forces that had elected Roosevelt in 1936, 1940 and 1944. This does not appear to be the case.⁵⁹ Stern also claimed responsibility for Marcantonio's reelection.

Peekskill

After the election, the Progressive Party fragmented. Alfred Stern struggled to keep his friends Marcantonio and Wallace working together and to obtain a position for himself within the party's inner circles. Within days of the defeat, Stern set up a meeting between himself, Wallace, and Marc to discuss what the election meant.⁶⁰ The three were to travel together to a meeting of the Progressive Party in Chicago where an electoral post-mortem was to be conducted. Wallace and Marc both wanted to get Alfred a seat on the board of the Progressive Party. Martha thought Alfred should accept and

⁵⁹ Truman embraced the ADA/anti-communist liberal side. Wallace was pulled away from a leftward drift by Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat Party as strongly as he was pulled to the left by Wallace. Dewey ran a poor campaign, running closely in New York, his home state. His campaign did not veer to the left, as Alfred alleges, rather Truman stayed where he had been at the start of the campaign, an anticommunist liberal.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.137.

then resign as a dramatic gesture. She concluded that the party was "through."⁶¹

Although Martha and Alfred remained in the party for a while, the "Progressives" left Wallace and Marcantonio behind. Marcantonio lost his congressional seat in the 1950 election when an anticommunist union between Democrats and Republicans defeated the ALP. Marc returned to his law practice.

Over the course of the campaign, the Sterns' made several long lasting friendships. Victor Rabinowitz, a radical lawyer involved in the Hiss defense and, in 1960, representing Cuba, said that he first met the Sterns through the ALP and the campaign. Tabitha Petran, as noted earlier, became a strong friend of the Sterns through Wallace's campaign. Lastly, the Sterns met communist lawyer Stanley Levison through the Progressive Party and became friends with him for a time. Levison later became a principal advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; it may have been his connections to the Sterns, among others, that contributed, at first, to the Bureau's close surveillance of King in the 1960's.⁶²

While Wallace was a leader in the Progressive Party, the Sterns also maintained close contact with him and Ilo. Within weeks of the election, Martha and Alfred were again compiling information on current issues for Wallace. At the end of November 1948, they put together information about the tensions in Germany with which to brief Wallace. In the aftermath of his defeat, though, Wallace took some time off. Martha wrote:

⁶¹ Ibid., p.138.

⁶² On Levison, King, and FBI, see David J. Garrow, The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.: From Solo to Memphis (New York; W.W. Norton, 1981). On Levison and the Sterns see FBI Memo, SAC New York to Director, 2/12/1960, 100-57453-NR and FBI Report, New York, 6/29/1960, 100-57453-2254.

Dearest Henry and Ilo, We love you dearly and miss not seeing you often. Don't you ever come to town, and won't you call us. You are not only the most courageous man in the world but darn sweet too. We are one hundred per cent behind you now and for always. Hope you are getting a good rest and have not forgotten us...

The Sterns, though, were not home for a while either as they began a cruise to Guatemala soon after the November 1948 election. Half the vacation was spent in Cuba as Martha became too seasick to continue.

Wallace attempted to continue working in the Progressive Party although he was regularly left out of its leadership decisions. He began to distance himself from the Party. His actions began to deepen the Sterns' concerns about his commitment to their causes. As tensions between Wallace and the Progressive Party rose through 1949, the Sterns began to complain about Wallace behind his back. In January 1949, Martha said that she did not think Wallace was interested in the Progressive Party and with politics in general. By the end of the year, Wallace had quit the party. Martha, in part, blamed Ilo for Wallace's movement away from the Progressive Party. During one telephone call, Martha remarked to an unknown conversant that she did not like Wallace's wife because Ilo wanted Wallace to leave politics. Martha did not make these feelings apparent to Ilo, although she did try to distance herself from Ilo.

The break between the Sterns and Wallace deepened because of Wallace's wariness of Communists and Communist influenced groups. On September 2, 1949, Alfred noted that Wallace had spoken bitterly about the Communist influence in the groups that had supported him. The context of the discussion was Sterns' attempt to get Wallace to accompany him and Martha to a concert by Paul Robeson to be in response to violent confrontations between far-left concert attendees and anti-Communist locals,

which had occurred at a Robeson concert the week before at Peekskill New York.

Wallace was not interested and refused to go with the Sterns.

The August 27, 1949 outdoor concert had begun peacefully but turned into a riot as local veteran organizations clashed with the far-left audience as it left. The groups fought each other with rocks, bottles, and whatever else was at hand. Martha later described the events in an article she wrote on her friend, Paul Robeson:

In Peekskill, USA, in June [sic], 1949, we all fought against a vicious outcropping of American fascism. They stoned us and wanted to lynch every one of us because we were Negroes, Jews, Progressives or just freedom-loving, non-conforming Americans.⁶³

Neither she nor Alfred, as noted above, attended the concert. They were at home with Wallace when news of the riot reached them. As reports of the riot in progress reached the Sterns and Wallace, they urged him to do something. Wallace called Governor Dewey of New York and told him that things were out of hand and asked that he do something to end the violence.

Several days later, the Sterns pressured Wallace to attend a second concert/demonstration that Robeson planned in Peekskill on September 4, 1949 to protest what happened at the original concert. Wallace worried that the protest was fronted by Communists and refused to attend unless he was assured that it was a broad based protest that would include ministers, Quakers, and other non-Communist pacifist groups. Martha complained that if Wallace would not make a public statement decrying the attacks on the concert-goers, he was a "fascist" and she would not talk to him again.⁶⁴

⁶³ Typescript of article, 1964, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. Notation on the typescript says it was published in Masses and Mainstream and La Hoy, apparently a Cuban journal.

⁶⁴ FBI Airtel, SAC NY, Director, 4/3/1957, 100-57453-1417.

Although things cooled off for a bit, the Sterns began to distance themselves from Wallace. Apologizing for similarly strong criticism of Wallace, Stern tried a softer approach to lead Wallace back towards the political position in which they wanted him. Stern remarked that he did not know how strong organized fascism was in the United States. Martha expressed similar sentiments in a letter she sent Wallace. Despite this apparent backtracking, the Sterns' faith in Wallace was fading. In November 1949, they agreed that his thinking had "not been too good of late."⁶⁵

In 1950, Martha and Alfred seriously reconsidered their political support of Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party. As they continued to push him to support the Soviet Union's line on foreign policy, Wallace balked. Alfred was quite disappointed when Wallace refused to make a statement condemning U.S. action in Korea.⁶⁶ The Sterns became even more concerned when Wallace finally quit the Progressive Party in disgust over its efforts to condemn the U.S. efforts to turn back the North Korean invasion of South Korea. The Sterns remained cordial with their old friend but distant, condemning his actions and bemoaning his apostasy to themselves.⁶⁷ Wallace, in turn, came to resent deeply the Sterns' role in his life and campaign.

This resentment came to a head sometime in 1950. At a dinner at the Sterns' Lewisboro home, Alfred got into argument with Wallace about the role of Communists in

⁶⁵ FBI Report, New York, 100-57453-422, p.29.

⁶⁶ Teletype, from SAC, Washington Field Office, to the Director, 8/4/50, 100-57453-477.

⁶⁷ None of this evidence appears in the so-called J. Edgar Hoover Official and Confidential File on Wallace. Were these files truly compendiums of political dirt on politicians Hoover wanted to blackmail as Theoharis and others have alleged, the strong connections Wallace had with several known Soviet agents would surely have been included in a "blackmail" type effort.

the Progressive Party movement. Wallace "in so many words called Stern a liar" when Alfred made the statement that the infiltration of the Progressive Party by the Communist Party during the 1948 presidential campaign was highly exaggerated. Wallace replied that this was no exaggeration, as the Communists, without his knowledge, had very definitely infiltrated the Progressive Party. The FBI was told this story in 1957 by someone present at the meal. The interviewee noted that as a result of this argument, the evening ended rather abruptly."⁶⁸ By 1957, Wallace had completely separated himself from the Sterns. When Martha and Alfred wrote him from Prague, he provided the postcard to the Bureau for analysis. "No need to return," he wrote on it.⁶⁹

Loose Ends

The Sterns' role in the Wallace campaign and their frustrations with Soviet agents were not the only matters the FBI learned about while it kept Martha and Alfred under surveillance. Many reports between 1947 and 1949 concerned Alfred's activity as a community organizer active in issues concerning rent control and housing policy. In a 1947 letter to the Director, New Haven SAC Scheidt noted that Alfred had been in the local news for several months for his work on the Emergency Rent Control Committee. This group sought increased state and federal aid for low-income housing and stronger rent control laws. Stern played a prominent role leading marches, demonstrations and

⁶⁸ FBI Report, New York, 7/18/1957, 100-57453-1794, p.52.

⁶⁹ Memo, Ladd to Hoover, 5/5/1952, 100-57453-765; Ladd noted that the Sterns were friendly with Wallace "up to about 1950." There is no evidence in the Stern file or the Wallace File in the Official and Confidential File collection that suggests that Hoover ever disseminated information about Wallace's connections to Soviet Agents during his campaign or in the years following it.

lobbying efforts of the Rent Committee. The "available information," according to Scheidt, "[is that] Stern is a conceited individual who is somewhat frustrated as far as obtaining the public prominence he desires."⁷⁰

The Bureau also took note of Martha's political efforts. Hers, though, were more internationally-oriented than Alfred's. Martha actively supported the American Council for a Democratic Greece between 1947 and 1949. The Council claimed to support the cause of democracy in Greece and to oppose what it saw as the imposition of Western imperialism through the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. Martha wrote letters and articles, participated in demonstrations, and raised funds to oppose American efforts aimed at preventing Soviet allies in Greece from gaining power there.

In 1949, the Sterns helped organize the National Council for World Peace, sponsored by the Arts, Sciences, and Professions Division of the Progressive Citizens of America. This group, led by Lillian Hellman, Paul Robeson, and other Stern friends, had been a staunch proponent of a world-view parallel to, if not the same as, the USSR. The Sterns were not members of the group but worked closely with it during Wallace's campaign and later. The group invited Stern friend, Pierre Cott, and Lester Hutchinson, a former British MP and fellow traveler, to address the convocation.⁷¹ Martha and Alfred maintained close relationships with many of those involved in the Wallace campaign even as the Progressive Party splintered.

Meanwhile, the FBI first began debating whether the Stern case should be forwarded to the Department of Justice for prosecution. A December 29, 1948 Report

⁷⁰ FBI Letter, Scheidt to the Director, 8/15/1947, 100-57453-34X1.

⁷¹ On Hutchinson see brief mention in David Cate, The Fellow Travellers: A Postscript to the Enlightenment, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973).

from New York on the Sterns' activities included a section on "Possible Violations of Law." The report reviewed the evidence gathered to date against the Sterns in light of the Foreign Agents Registration Act [22 U.S.C. 601] and conspiracy to commit espionage, a violation of 18 U.S.C. 794. Although a large number of incidents were martialed to show that Alfred could be considered an un-registered foreign agent, the Bureau had little to show that the BMMC was to be a cover company for Soviet espionage. The primary evidence for this at the time was the testimony of one informant, Borris Morros.⁷²

They had even less probative evidence linking Martha to these potential violations. The New York agent suggested that "the activities of [Alfred] Stern do not reflect any like activities on the part of Martha Dodd Stern ...on the surface." Morros had told agents about Martha's knowledge of and enthusiasm for the Zubilin's project but corroboration was impossible. Morros had also told the Bureau that Martha had sent a critical report on Morros through the Russian consulate in New York. Evidence that could both corroborate Morros about Martha and be of value in a court of law, though, was needed.

The New York Agent was confident that such evidence would be found. Martha's actions, especially, convinced him that she would prove the guiltier of the two. Through wiretaps and surveillance, Agents had observed Martha being "very cautious" in her meetings with Valentin Sorokin and other East Bloc officials. She was "very cautious and cagey" in her conferences with her husband and "continually rebuke[d] him for his stupidity in not being likewise when they have a meeting with certain contacts." Sensing

⁷² FBI Report, NY, 12/29/1948, 100-57453-307. In the FOIA release the name of the informant was withheld [b7D/b2] indicating a human informant who had died prior to the FOIA processing of the file. The only possible person who this could be is Morros.

something amiss in this behavior, the agent appears to present it in order to suggest that Martha, too, might eventually be a proper target for prosecution. Clearly, there was not legal case to be made against the Sterns at this point.

It was not until 1951 that the FBI decided that a legal case could be made against the Sterns and it was not until 1956 that the Stern file and the rest of the MOCASE investigation was passed forward to the DOJ. In that time, the Sterns faced the possible loss of their adopted son, Bobby, feared that Martha might be called before Joe McCarthy's committee, and began to suspect that the FBI had taken an intense interest in their activities. The combination of these three events in the spring of 1953 led the Sterns to flee to Mexico with no warning given to family or friends. They even fooled their FBI surveillance, which appeared convinced the Sterns were simply going on a vacation. In Mexico, the Sterns quickly settled down and acquired the necessary documents to live there. They picked up their lives and continued much as they had before. The FBI had a much more difficult time tracking the Sterns and their activities in Mexico, but continued to monitor the Sterns extensively when they periodically returned to the United States for personal and familial reasons. These events - the Sterns' life in Mexico between 1953 and 1957 and the FBI's debates over when to prosecute the Sterns and how to bring them to the United States for prosecution - constitute the next chapter.

Chapter 7

The United States vs. Martha and Alfred Stern, 1951 - 1957

Prosecute?

The Bureau did not show a willingness to consider submitting the Sterns case to the Department of Justice again until 1951. In a January 15, 1951 Memo, a lead case agent considered whether the Sterns could be charged under Section 20 of the Internal Security Act. This provision required persons who had knowledge of the espionage, counterespionage, or sabotage service of a foreign country, or who had received instruction or assignment in these things to register with the Subversive Activities Control Board. The ongoing operation of Morros as a double-agent, though, had not been compromised yet and was still considered a valuable part of Bureau counterintelligence efforts. The investigation continued.

A year later, 1952, the Bureau reconsidered the matter. This reconsideration was more involved than the earlier ones. Headquarters assigned the offices most involved in the Stern investigation - New York, New Haven, Los Angeles, and San Francisco - with analyzing of the evidence developed in the case to that point. They were to consider it in light of whether or not a prosecutor could use it in court. Clearly wiretaps, tesurs [technical surveillance, like microphones], mail covers, and especially surreptitious

entries - potentially illegal trespasses to gain intelligence information¹ - produced no valid criminal evidence; any case against the Sterns would have to be based on other evidence.

San Francisco replied first. In a June 27 memo, the SAC noted that:

it does not appear that investigations by the San Francisco Office have developed, through surveillance, any information that would support the testimony of Boris Morros.²

New York took longer to review its voluminous tesur records, the results of its mail covers, and its informant reports compiled against the Sterns. Eventually summary memos were made indicating which "informants," the term referred to both real persons and electronic tools might be used in court.

By March 1952, it was clear that the Bureau debate over prosecuting the Sterns' had reached the point where prosecution was a serious possibility. In a March 10, 1952 Memo, the New York SAC suggested a trap for the Sterns. First, he proposed, Jack Soble would be arrested for espionage and conspiracy to commit espionage. The Sterns, meanwhile, would be placed under intense surveillance and special grand jury subpoenas would be secured to serve on Martha and Alfred requiring them to testify before the grand jury. If Soble proved uncooperative, Agents would immediately serve the Sterns with the subpoenas. New York did not expect that they would have a chance to interview the Sterns prior to the grand jury, but planned to talk with them following their appearance.

¹ Under current statutory and case law, an entry to install a microphone, surveillance device, or to complete a clandestine search is legal if executed under a valid warrant. The law made no such provisions at that time.

² FBI Memo, San Francisco to Director, 6/27/1952, 100-57453-770

The New York Field Office expected Martha and Alfred to admit to a business connection with Morros and with the BMMC. These were matters of public record. The Agents, though, thought that the Sterns would deny any connections with the Sobles. This would constitute perjury because Bureau Agents could place the Sterns with both Jack and Myra.³ As in the Alger Hiss case, the Sterns could then be convicted of perjury. They would probably receive similar sentences, i.e. five years on each count to run concurrently.⁴ If they did testify about their relationship with the Sobles, the prosecutor could press them for more incriminating information.⁵ The final consideration, and again the most important one, was that Morros continued to meet with Soviet contacts in Europe and Russia⁶ and Jack Soble was still trying to patch matters up with his superiors. MOCASE remained under active investigation although parts of it, like the Stern investigation, were no longer producing information of much value to FBI counterintelligence.⁷ It was not yet ripe to send to the Department of Justice.

The Bureau's distinction between a counterintelligence investigation and a criminal investigation illustrates several things. From the later 1930's, the government

³ FBI Memo, New York, Director, 3/10/1952, 100-57453-722. Interestingly, the SAC noted that no interview with Henry Wallace was contemplated at that time due to his "prominence in US political circles.

⁴ Allen Weinstein, Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), pp.497-8.

⁵ The Sterns, in this case, would have either lied, expecting the Bureau could not prove a connection, or plead the Fifth Amendment so as not to incriminate themselves. If they pled the fifth, the US Attorney could immunize them and demand their testimony.

⁶ It is not clear how often or to what extent Morros was meeting with Soviet operatives. Since few documents have yet been released dealing with Morros's service as a double-agent, this aspect of the MOCASE remains unknown.

⁷ FBI Memo, [b7C] to Belmont, 8/13/1952, 100-57453-782.

clearly saw the goals of counterintelligence as distinct from those of criminal prosecution. The two types of investigations, criminal and counterintelligence, had different goals and so the Bureau employed different means in pursuing them. Counterintelligence investigations aimed to identify and neutralize the operations of foreign intelligence agents against the United States. Although prosecution was one way to neutralize an agent of a foreign government, it was not the only way. This created problems when a foreign counterintelligence case was brought to trial.⁸ Lastly, it should be noted that this distinction was not publicly debated. Aspects of it were a matter of public argument, but the presumption of a realm of executive secrecy in intelligence matters as well as the difficulty of proving espionage cases given the political implications involved with this secrecy made these subjects difficult to debate in the public sphere. In all of this, though, the DOJ, the Executive Office of the President, the Congress, and to some extent, the Courts generally accepted the validity of this distinction and the different means employed in the different investigations.⁹

⁸ E.g., Judith Coplon, a young Department of Justice employee, was caught passing classified documents to a Soviet agent. Although convicted twice, each conviction was overturned because of FBI use of wiretaps to identify when Coplon was going to meet her case officer. Ironically, the Bureau had developed clear probable cause in the matter from its work on the Venona material. Under laws passed in 1968 and 1960 that allowed Title III wiretaps and set up the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance courts, the Bureau could have easily obtained a warrant for its taps. At the time Coplon was an active agent this was impossible.

⁹ On this, Stephen Knott's, Secret and Sanctioned: Covert Operations and the American Presidency (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), illustrates the issues with particular emphasis on covert actions. Knott does not directly address domestic intelligence investigations, but a similar argument may be made for some of these as well.

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's Secrecy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) compellingly lays out the problems that secrecy creates when it is used as a regulatory mechanism to control what a citizen may do and what a citizen may know. Moynihan argues that some secrecy is necessary, but finds it troubling that in the public

Do They Know?

For years FBI surveillance of the Sterns as described in previous chapters had been carefully executed. Martha, as the FBI noted, was naturally cautious. She had learned those habits in Germany under Diels' tutelage and the example of Mildred Harnack. Overall, though, Martha and Alfred did not appear to be aware fully of the Bureau's coverage for many years. At times the Sterns appeared wary of potential surveillance, but they made no regular habit of checking for tails, listening devices, or other signs of federal interest. The few occasions of wariness they evidenced were not based on specific knowledge but on general suspicion.

It was only as the Bureau began seriously to consider (ca. summer, 1951) whether to prosecute the Sterns that Martha and Alfred appeared to realize the FBI's intense interest in them. That summer, they applied to renew their passports. Both used their passports regularly and expected little trouble in renewing them. As consideration of their renewal applications dragged through the summer, though, Alfred began to worry. He complained to the State Department in a July letter. Ruth Shipley, Chief of the Passport Division, replied in an August 7 telegram that "Department is unable to advise when passports will be issued. Awaiting security clearances."¹⁰

debate necessary to sustain a republican form of government, the information needed by citizens and their representatives to make informed choices is often kept secret. This means that neither the public nor its representatives can make an informed decision on such matters and negates the effectiveness of checks upon the executive's ability to exercise power.

¹⁰ Telegram, Chief Ruth S. Shipley to Stern, 8/7/1951, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

Not surprisingly, the FBI would have been the source of the clearances. Soon after the Sterns applied for passports, the Passport Division asked the Bureau to run a name check on them. This sparked a flurry of correspondence over what information should be given to State. The Bureau's concern was that MOCASE might be compromised if State learned of the connections between the Sterns and Soviet intelligence. On the other hand, the Bureau did not want to make it easy for the Sterns to obtain passports as it might make it difficult to move on MOCASE should the time for prosecution of the subjects arise. In the end, Hoover ordered New York to report on the Sterns' subversive actions and associations without mention of espionage

The security clearances did not come through. In November, Acting Chief of the Passport Division Willis Young notified Alfred that:

After careful consideration, the Department is of the opinion that the proposed travel of yourself and Mrs. Martha Stern, would be contrary to the best interests of the United States.¹¹

The Sterns had been officially notified that they were security risks. Complaining to Young, Alfred wrote:

We have been at times in disagreement, as we have been at times in agreement, with the policies and program of this administration. We maintain that it is our inalienable right to express such disagreements; to be able to do this is a measure of the health of our democracy.

This matter, according to the Sterns, was one more attempt to put "left-wingers" down by "fascist" America. Alfred warned that other nations would find America was hypocritical because it preached freedom of speech but restricted "liberal and progressive citizens."¹²

¹¹ Letter, Willis Young to Alfred Stern, 11/27/1951, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

¹² Letter, AKS to Mr. Young, 12/10/1951, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

The Sterns became more wary of the threat of surveillance after this incident. This may have been for one of two reasons: 1) as the Sterns were not engaged in Soviet espionage during the years they were under surveillance, they did not feel a need to be evasive or concerned; or 2) they were truly ignorant of the Bureau's interest in them. That they tried to reestablish contacts with persons they knew to be involved in Soviet espionage, suggests that 2 is the likely answer. At least in the first year of FBI surveillance, i.e. July 1947 through 1948, the Sterns appeared unaware of Bureau interest. Martha's and Alfred's attempts to renew their relationship the Sobles, the open discussion of their political maneuvers to influence Henry Wallace, and similar actions suggest they did not seriously consider microphone surveillance or wiretaps. Martha's warnings to Alfred about being so open over the telephone lead to change in neither Alfred's behavior nor Martha's. These warnings suggest that Martha's concerns arose from habit developed during her German years and concern that Alfred's staff might overhear the discussion rather than fear of current FBI interest.

Throughout the 1950's, though, Martha and Alfred joked about the possibility that the FBI watched them. During a March 1952 trip to Puerto Rico, the Bureau overheard Martha remarked after an all-day shopping trip, "If there are any FBI men around here, they are not learning anything very interesting."¹³ Another time, when the Sterns were visiting Alfred's daughter Adele "Delly" Rome in Los Angeles, Martha asked Alfred if any FBI had followed him. "They are not," replied Alfred, and if they did, he continued,

¹³ FBI Report, San Juan, 4/19/52, Alfred K. Stern, et.al., 100-57453-751.

they would be "awfully bored."¹⁴ The prospect of FBI interest was not a serious matter, even when the Sterns appeared more wary of it.

If the Sterns were unaware of the Bureau's interest in them, others were not. Years of close surveillance had made an impression on the Sterns' neighbors in Lewisboro and rumors of the government's interest eventually surfaced in their neighborhood. In 1950, the New Haven SAC informed the Bureau that "several" individuals in Ridgefield, CT (the town neighboring Lewisboro, NY and the Sterns' mailing address) were currently aware of the fact that the "FBI is watching "subjects' mail." Although, the Sterns appeared unaware of the Bureau's coverage, he explained, the mail cover on their country residence was immediately canceled; the Director agreed and concluded it was not great loss in light of its "relative unproductiveness."¹⁵

The tracks of the FBI's investigation are still faintly visible even today in the Ridgefield/Lewisboro area. Mr. Alan Amman, research assistant to Dr. Douglas Wheeler, interviewed a number of individuals who had been long term residents of the area. Richard Venus, a self-described "rabid anticommunist," was the postmaster of Lewisboro during the 1950's and stated in an interview that he was in contact with the FBI while the Sterns lived in the area. He may well have been the source of the rumor noted above. Other residents remembered the Sterns and their flight, although these memories were indistinct and somewhat faulty by September 1990 when Allan Amman interviewed them. One remembered that there were "Soviet Cottages," perhaps a

¹⁴ FBI Report, Los Angeles, 9/16/55, Alfred K. Stern, et.al., 100-57453-1111.

¹⁵ FBI Airtel, Director to SAC New Haven 8/24/1951, Alfred K. Stern, et.al., 100-57453-486.

reference to small cabins on the Stern property that their guests might stay in from time to time. Another person remembered a tennis game with Henry Wallace.¹⁶

The Searching Light

While the Bureau debated whether to submit the Stern case for prosecution, Martha and Alfred - free of any known connection to Soviet intelligence - continued to follow their respective interests. The Bureau continued to watch the Sterns. Martha continued to publish regularly though she was not a prolific writer. Two of her stories were published during the summer of 1950. In *The Negro Digest*, Martha's story "The Musician" told about white resentment towards a black musician in a Cuban restaurant. *Masses and Mainstream* published another story, "Maria." "Maria" related the tale of a woman who was crushed because she rebelled against an abusive, capitalist plantation overseer. The climax of the story came as the starving Maria refused a grapefruit from a capitalist American. She would rather starve than take the overseer's charity.¹⁷

Martha also worked on a new novel about the effects of loyalty oaths on academia. Initially the work was to be entitled The Immortal Parlan, but The Searching Light, was chosen instead. In the novel, Martha fictionalized the California University System loyalty oath controversy of 1949/1950.¹⁸ Reflecting on her writing later, Martha

¹⁶ Report by Mr. Alan Amman to Dr. Douglas Wheeler, 9/1990, copy in author's possession. The story about "Soviet cottages" is likely a local legend that arose after the Stern's indictment and flight in 1957.

¹⁷ 100-57453-537.

¹⁸ Ellen Schrecker's No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) contains the most complete discussion of this

said she thought the work was her best, "a more mature and deeper book than the others," "too didactic, but deeper in characterization" than Sowing the Wind.¹⁹

The Searching Light, published in 1955 by Citadel Press, was set at a fictional university named Penfield. Penfield was situated between the Washington and the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia; a small version of the University of Chicago transplanted within driving distance of the Dodd family farm. Martha continued to explore the themes from her earlier work, i.e. the nature of fascism and its rise in America. Also like the earlier works, Martha's family provided the model for several characters in the book. The Searching Light, like Sowing the Wind, presents thinly disguised portraits of important people from her life, placed in a fictionalized version of real events.

Martha's protagonist, Professor John Minot, was an expert on Milton who lived on a farm several hours drive from Penfield. In between his teaching and other academic pursuits, Minot tended his working farm. He was at home in both settings and relied on his farm work to provide a respite from campus politics and academic struggle. He could be found plowing the fields in the morning, teaching in the afternoon, and debating loyalty oaths in the evening. Minot is unmistakably a thinly disguised portrait of Professor William E. Dodd.²⁰

The rest of the Dodd family appears as well, Martha twice. Minot's daughter, Lucy, a young, intelligent, vivacious, and budding artist is clearly identifiable as Martha,

controversy. Schrecker provides a factual version of these events and her argument closely parallels the argument from fiction in Martha's novel.

¹⁹ Letter, March 7, 1972, Martha Dodd to Dexter Masters, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC; Letter, Martha Dodd to Mr. Frucht, October 19, 1982, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

²⁰ In the actual controversy in California, Minot's position was taken by Edward Tolman, a physics professor.

a Martha before she went to Germany, though. Lucy, unlike Martha, was an only child.²¹ As noted in chapter 1, Bill appears in the novel as a minor character, the male half of a set of twins, students of Minot. The twins are intelligent, attractive, from a working class background, and full of class-consciousness. At the novel's climax, they press Minot to stand firm and reject a compromise oath proposed by the Regents. Their critical support leads to Minot's heroic but ineffective stand. He loses his job, but sparks a reaction across the country that may or may not prevent the rise of American fascism represented in the oath controversy. The ending is ambivalent because Minot, despite his heroic stand, was limited by his lack of a class-consciousness that would have shown him the "true" socioeconomic basis for the Regents' actions; he did not understand the source of the conflict or its "world-historical" implications. The twin ingenue knew this and sought to guide their favorite professor to do the right thing for the right reason. Their activism and influence on Minot suggest the half of Martha's character not represented in Lucy.

Like Sowing the Wind, the plot and most of The Searching Light's other important characters are modeled on the events and persons of the loyalty oath controversy that shook the University of California in 1949/1950. The villains of the novel are the Board of Regents and their corporate backers. The head of the board, a "captain of industry," is a nascent fascist. The events Martha narrates almost exactly mirror those of the California fight. The difference in the novel comes from the fact that the oath resisters at Penfield were led by William Dodd, i.e. John Minot.²²

²¹ As noted earlier, Martha was ambivalent about her brother. Bill's absence as a Minot may also have been Martha's way of acknowledging his recent death.

²² Schrecker No Ivory Tower, pp.117-125.

Martha made a strong effort to base her story in the actual events. In January 1952, she and Alfred visited California to do research and meet some of those most closely involved in the fight. She interviewed a number of persons involved in the California loyalty oath battle in 1949/1950. She talked to Edward Tolman - the "unofficial leader" of the oath resisters. She also saw Alexander Meikeljohn - a radical libertarian, free-speech advocate. Others whose names do not appear in the Martha Dodd papers and were withheld in the FOIA release of the Stern file were also contacted.²³

Martha apparently knew Tolman from her earlier trips to California and sought his advice before she contacted others involved in the loyalty oath fight. One of them she did not think would willingly talk with her if he knew her purpose, because he was a liberal anticommunist. Tolman suggested that Martha tell the man that she was writing an article for The Nation; Alfred suggested that Life Magazine would be better.²⁴ Each thought that Martha's background and true aim, an anti-fascist polemic in novel form, would not be welcomed by the person the three were discussing.²⁵ It is not apparent from the FBI reports whether Martha talked to this person or not, because the names have been withheld.

²³ See correspondence between Martha Dodd and Alexander Meikeljohn in Box 7 of the Martha Dodd Papers and 100-57453-702.

²⁴ FBI Report, San Francisco, 1/18/1952, 100-57453-702.

²⁵ On the Sterns' train-ride home from California, the Bureau observed a chance meeting between Martha, Alfred, and nuclear physicist Robert Oppenheimer. Because the meeting was clearly casual, unexpected, and did not involve discussion of Oppenheimer's nuclear work, the Bureau treated the contact as insignificant. The incident had no apparent connection with the revocation of Oppenheimer's security clearance two years later. The event again illustrates the blanket coverage the Bureau kept over the Sterns. Without examining related serials in the Oppenheimer file/files, this conclusion remains tentative. See Stern File, 100-57454-702.

Martha was unable to find a major publisher for her work for several years. Between 1953 and 1955 she submitted it to several mainstream publishers, each of whom rejected it. Given the political/cultural climate in America at that time, this was hardly surprising. In 1956, the Citadel Press, a far-left publisher run by Communist historian Phillip Foner, published Martha's second and final novel.²⁶ Since Citadel Press was a small publisher that catered to a small audience, the Sterns helped support the imprint of 3000 copies with a \$4,000 donation.²⁷ The Searching Light garnered some notable cover blurbs from people like Albert Einstein and Alexander Meiklejohn who "liked the book very much," but unlike her earlier books, few people read it.²⁸

During the early 1950's while Martha completed her novel, Alfred continued to dabble in politics and manage his investments. The Bureau, not surprisingly, found little, if any intelligence value any of these activities. It appears that the only information developed between the time of Martha's California research and the publication of her novel tended to be of a personal nature. The Bureau, hoping to develop further information about the Sterns' past connections to Soviet intelligence, instead, only witnessed family tragedies and trials.

²⁶ That same year, 1956, Martha's old publisher and friend, Bennett Cerf of Random House published Don Whiteheads authorized history of the FBI, The FBI Story (New York: Random House, 1956).

²⁷ FBI Report, New York, 100-57453-1051, p.17. The details appear to have come from the search of Alfred's office contents by FBI and Customs at Idlewild Airport, New York.

²⁸ Letter, 2/13/1956, Meiklejohn to Martha Dodd, Martha Dodd Papers.

William E. Dodd, Jr.

In early 1952, Bill Dodd was diagnosed with incurable stomach cancer. Bill had had few successes since the NKVD had separated him from Martha in 1943. For a brief time in 1945, he served as a correspondent for *Tass*, the Soviet news agency; Martha complained that he compromised her work, so Bill was dismissed. Next he found a job with the International Longshoremen Workers Union [ILWU] editing the union's Dispatch. Bill served happily as editor in California from 1947 through 1949. He lost his job when the CIO purged itself of Communist dominated unions, like the ILWU. In the two and a half years before his diagnosis, Bill was employed selling books in Macy's Department Store in San Francisco.²⁹

The Sterns, Bill's second wife Katherine Hubbard Dodd [Kay], and his doctors decided not to tell him that he only had months to live, therefore, the FBI knew more of his plight than Bill did. FBI surveillance also revealed that Alfred was less than generous in assisting Bill although Martha was truly concerned over her brother's illness. Alfred pressed Kay to sell securities in order to pay for Bill's care. He was angry because he was convinced that she lied when she agreed to sell the stock in order to get Alfred to loan her the money for Bill's care. Another wiretap overheard Alfred as he sought his attorney's advice on how to let Kay know that he would loan her the money for Bill's care but that he expected her to repay him out of his brother-in-law's estate. Martha appeared to be unaware of her husband's scrooge-like behavior.

²⁹ FBI Memo, SAC to Director, 8/4/1947, Alfred Stern, et al., 100-57453-60.

Bill died on October 18, 1952. He was cremated and placed in a Dodd family vault at the Rock Creek Park Cemetery, Washington, D.C.³⁰ Immediately after Bill's death, Martha and Kay argued over how to remember him. Martha wanted to release a long, detailed paean to Bill's career as a "pre-mature anti-fascist;" Kay wanted only a brief notice of her husband's death to be made.³¹ In the end, Martha released her version of the obituary in New York where The Guardian, PM, and The Daily Worker ran it; Kay released hers in California. Soon after this argument, Martha rather tactlessly demanded that Kay give her the correspondence Martha had with Bill over the years; she did not receive the letters. Martha later reminisced that her sister-in-law hated her, and she her: "[She was] jealous of Bill's attachment to me and I thought [her] unworthy of him!"³² The mutual animosity surrounding Bill's death was similar to conflicts before he became sick.

Returning to New York after Bill's death, Martha and Alfred prepared for a long Mexican vacation. Alfred wanted to explore several business interests; Martha to rest and relax after finishing The Searching Light. They initially planned to leave in December 1952. By January 1953, they had pushed the date of embarkation further into the spring because Martha had not yet finished work on her book and could not leave Lewisboro. That March 1953, Alfred traveled alone to Mexico for ten days to survey the

³⁰ 100-57453-799. Several years before, Martha had her parents disinterred from the family farm and buried at the D.C. cemetery. [See correspondence between Martha and several of her Johns cousins in the Martha Dodd Papers, LOC, re this action.]

³¹ 100-57453-803.

³² Letter, Martha Dodd Stern to Audrey [Fuss?], 5/16/1975, Box 5, File 4, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

area for a business venture. Martha finished her book soon after his return and the Sterns again planned their belated trip.

Adoption Problems

In May, they again delayed their departure; the reasons were serious. Mrs. Sandra Sheffield,³³ the birth mother of the Sterns' adopted son Robert, filed suit in Chicago to have the adoption rescinded. According to front-page newspaper accounts, Sheffield claimed the adoption was "obtained by fraud." In her suit, Sheffield alleged that she had been taken advantage of after Robert's birth on July 7, 1945. She argued that she had been in no condition to make a rational decision, but the doctor and Sterns' attorney improperly pressured her to put her son up for adoption. Sheffield also claimed that she was lied to when told that the adoption could be rescinded within a year. When she tried to get her son back soon after the birth, she was told that the adoption was permanent.³⁴ Having recently inherited a sizeable estate from her dead husband, Sheffield said she was now well situated to care for Robert. The Sterns' household, she continued, was neither proper, nor "conducive to the best welfare and mental-well-being of the child." Although not clearly stated in the suit, the undercurrent of this charge appeared to have a lot to do with the Sterns' political advocacy and Communist ties.

³³ Sheffield was born Eleanor Johnson and grew up in the Chicago area. At the time of Robert's birth, she was 18 years old. She had married and divorced Robert's biological father prior to the birth in 1945. After the birth of Robert, Johnson legally changed her name to Sandra Arden. She married J. Ingram Sheffield and had two sons with him. He died in November 1952 and left her a substantial inheritance. [FBI Report, Chicago, 6/12/1953, 100-57453-861. The Chicago Daily Sun Times and the Chicago American each ran several stories on the Sheffield suit; the clippings may be found in the Stern File.

³⁴ FBI Report, Chicago, 6/12/1953, 100-57453-861.

Not surprisingly, the suit "greatly agitated" the Sterns who immediately hired Herbert Lautman to represent them in the Cook County Court. Lautman immediately issued a statement to the press countering Sheffield's claims. Lautman said that the Sterns were "planning an all-out fight to keep as their own the child they have reared for eight years." Leon Despres, the Sterns' attorney on the original adoption, denied any fraud as did the doctor who had delivered Robert.³⁵

The Bureau first learned of the suit from Sheffield herself. She contacted the Chicago Field Office for information about the Sterns in May 1953. The Bureau told Chicago that agents should not make contact with her because of the ongoing MOCASE. Chicago later told the Bureau that no information had been given to Sheffield. The SAC said that she was advised that the Bureau had no jurisdiction over adoption matters. Chicago did tell Sheffield that the Bureau appreciated any information the public could furnish concerning violations of law and matters concerning the security of the United States. The Bureau agreed that Chicago's approach was correct and suggested that the office should discreetly determine Sheffield's background and reliability. Chicago was ordered to follow the course of the trial and notify the Bureau of any significant developments.³⁶

Allegations later emerged accusing the Chicago Field Office of playing a more significant role in the Sheffield suit than simply monitoring the proceedings. The Sterns claimed that the Bureau was the source of Sheffield's suit to rescind the adoption. This claim is not supported by the files released but, it should be noted, it is unclear from the

³⁵ FBI Report, New York, 6/1/1953, 100-57453-856.

³⁶ FBI Teletype, Boardman to Director, 6/3/1953, 100-57453-858; FBI Airtel, Chicago to Director, 5/29/1953, 100-57453-860.

file when and how Sheffield first contacted the Chicago Field Office. Why she went to the FBI in the matter is also a mystery that the available documents do not solve. Sheffield may have learned of the Sterns' left-wing/radical connections either by their public reputation, or more likely through a private detective. Therefore, it is possible Sheffield simply thought it natural to go the FBI for information about accused Communists. It is unlikely, given the seriousness with which the Bureau approached MOCASE, that an agent would have jeopardized it by injecting himself into a simple adoption matter.

At the end of May 1953, the Sterns traveled to Chicago for the court proceedings in the Sheffield suit. Clearly, they were becoming more aware of the Bureau's interest in their activities. While travelling in a sleeper car on the train, Martha berated Alfred for his running commentary while reading the newspaper the night before. She thought he talked too much and should write down anything he had to say. Because she said this in the sleeping car, Alfred most likely read the paper in a more public place and Martha feared those around might have them under surveillance. Martha was unaware that her sleeping compartment was bugged; nosey patrons in the dining or smoking car were the least of her worries.

The May 28 hearings the Sterns attended ended without a decision in the case. Judge Jarecki issued a continuance in the matter. Apparently, the Sterns later won the initial battle, but Sheffield appealed. As of November 1953, though, the matter had not yet been heard in the appellate court. Even in 1957, the Bureau was unable to determine

with certainty the final disposition of the matter. Judge Jarecki had sealed the records and no final settlement was entered in the Court's books.³⁷

A second concern arose soon after Sheffield's suit was put on hold. In the June 28, 1953 "Lyon's Den," a New York Post political gossip column, Leonard Lyons reported that a "daughter of one of F.D.R.'s Ambassadors in Europe will be subpoenaed by Senator McCarthy's committee." Many noticed the column. Jack Soble mentioned it to Boris Morros as he was concerned that Lyons meant Martha. Morros, in turn, reported Soble's comment to the Bureau. Several days later, Lyons reported again. The "American author subpoenaed by McCarthy will not appear: her lawyer says she has amnesia." The Bureau interpreted this as a reference to Martha too.³⁸ Although the FBI had provided McCarthy with information at first, the relationship soured as Hoover found McCarthy's charges against the Eisenhower Administration unpalatable and so he distanced the Bureau from him.³⁹ Years later Sylvia Crane, a Stern friend from the early forties through their deaths, reminisced that Joseph McCarthy tried to call Martha (and

³⁷ FBI Airtel, Chicago to Director, 3/29/1957, 100-57453-1071.

³⁸ In a later report, the FBI surmised that the Sterns, by visiting California in 1955, might have been "testing the waters" to determine if it was safe to move back to the United States. McCarthy had been censured by then (12/2/1954) and the glory days of the House Committee on Un-American Activities had passed. [FBI Teletype, Washington (D.C.) to the Director, 6/15/1955, 100-57463-1068.] There is no suggestion in the Stern FBI files that the Bureau interceded with McCarthy to prevent him from prematurely calling Martha before his committee. Lyons' comment may have been about someone else entirely, perhaps, Sylvia Crane. Actually, as the Bureau soon learned, the Sterns had returned because Alfred's daughter was terminally ill with cancer [see below]. They showed no interest in returning to the United States while they visited.

³⁹ Richard Gid Powers, Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover (New York: The Free Press, 1987), p.354.

herself) to testify before his committee in order to embarrass New Dealers.⁴⁰ Alfred once described Crane as a "Marxist liberal, if such a thing can exist."⁴¹

Mexican Chic

On July 4, 1953, McCarthy and Sheffield lost any chance to call Sterns to testify. That day the Sterns left for their long delayed vacation to Mexico; clearly, the circumstances Martha and Alfred confronted suggested that had they stayed in the United States they would have faced serious political and legal problems. It immediately became apparent to the Bureau that the Sterns visit was more than a vacation. In retrospect, their actions over the prior month suggest that this had been their plan all along. Why the Sterns decided to move to Mexico is not entirely clear, but several reasons may be noted. In later correspondence, Martha and Alfred would sometimes cite the Sheffield suit as the reason for their move. Other times, though, they would claim that government pressure on "progressives" convinced them to leave for more hospitable shores. Because the Sterns clearly feared Sheffield, McCarthy, and the FBI, the motive was probably due to a combination of all three. The Sterns not only caught McCarthy and Sheffield unaware, but fooled the Bureau too.

Whatever their reasons, Martha and Alfred had long been interested in Mexico. Several of Alfred's business ventures, like the IACP, involved Mexico. The Sterns had traveled there several times during their marriage, including their honeymoon. As noted earlier, the Bureau learned in its internal security investigation of Alfred that he was in

⁴⁰ See Crane's remarks in the transcript of the memorial meeting in honor of Alfred K. Stern held at Corliss Lamont's New York apartment in 1986. A copy is in the Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴¹ Letter, Alfred Stern to Fred Jerome, 6/15/1977, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

contact with persons connected to the ALTO Case who resided in Mexico. The Bureau later thought Alfred might have been involved with some of the Smith Act fugitives thought to have fled to Mexico after losing their appeals to the Supreme Court.⁴² At the time of the Smith Act defendants' disappearance during the summer of 1951, Alfred explored transferring funds to Mexico. Agents wondered if he were providing some of these fugitives with financial support.

The actions taken by the Sterns while they fought Sheffield's suit indicated that they planned more than a simple vacation. The same day the news of Sheffield's suit appeared in the Chicago newspapers, the Sterns had placed their Lewisboro home on the market for \$100,000; they probably would have known of the suit at least a day or two before the newspapers, so these actions could have been in response to the matter.⁴³ At the time, Bureau wiretaps indicated that the Sterns were telling friends that they intended to rent a place in New York City for a while after they returned from Mexico. Martha and Alfred, according to Bureau wiretaps, told their friends they would be gone for six weeks.

In June, Alfred bought two new station wagons and talked of loading them with many of their possessions to take to Mexico. Rather than fly or cruise as they usually did, the Sterns planned to drive to Mexico from New York; Ralph Scott, the Sterns' long-time butler/servant, would drive the second car. By the end of June, days before they

⁴² 100-57453-607. Four of the eleven Communists convicted under the Smith Act in 1949 jumped bail pending their appeal. These were Gus Hall, Gil Green, Robert Thompson, and Henry Winston. They were found to have fled to either Mexico or hidden within the Communist underground apparatus in the United States [Whitehead, The FBI Story, p.294 and ff.]. It is not known if the Sterns knew any of these men.

⁴³ FBI Teletype, New York to the Director, 5/16/1953, 100-57453-862.

were to leave, they dropped the idea of driving and bought plane tickets. They would fly with Bobby. They were clearly in a hurry to leave the country.

Agents of the FBI observed the Sterns in Mexico City on July 7. Within days, the Bureau realized they had turned their plan for a six-week vacation into a permanent residence. Their decision clearly surprised close friends and family. Alfred's daughter, Adele Rosenwald Rome, wrote:

Aren't you nice crazy people! Here we thought you were going to Mexico for a few weeks and then back through our house and home. And then without any warning here you are practically natives of Mexico.⁴⁴

Given the Sterns' ties to Mexico and the preparatory actions they took, it is surprising the Bureau did not conclude that they were making a more permanent trip. The circumstantial evidence suggests that Martha and Alfred had planned the matter this way over the course of several weeks. Their ability to conceal these plans from the Bureau suggests that they had finally become wary of Bureau interest.

Settling in for a long stay in Mexico City, Martha and Alfred began to notify friends and business relations of their move. In August, Alfred transferred his bank account from the National City Bank of New York City to the National City Bank of Mexico City.⁴⁵ He and Martha also began to look for a way to make their residency official. Because they had left on a six-month tourist visa, they would be illegal aliens by Christmas. Both applied for permanent status and by December 1953 Mexico had granted them immigrant visas.

⁴⁴ Letter, 7/19/1953, [Adele] "Delly" Rome to "Hi Mexicans", Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁴⁵ FBI Memorandum, New York to Director, 8/18/1953, 100-57453-889.

The FBI was very upset by this turn of events. The Bureau's Mexican Legal Attaché [Legat] had arranged with certain Mexican officials to deny the Sterns official status. The FBI intended to use the Sterns' illegal status to force their extradition when the time for prosecution in the MOCASE arrived.⁴⁶ Although this might have been difficult, it was not impossible. Several years before the Bureau had arrested Morton Sobell, a Rosenberg accomplice, through an arrangement with the Mexican police.⁴⁷ The Sterns' new status made matters more difficult. The Mexican government, clearly, was not of one mind on issues like the Communist presence in Mexico.

The means by which the Sterns gained their residency also worried the Bureau. At first the Bureau thought that the fact that the Sterns had lied about their ability to procure U.S. passports would prevent them from gaining official status in Mexico. This was wrong; connections and cash could solve such problems. The Bureau told the Justice Department what had been learned:

...the Sterns are in possession of full documentation as legal immigrants which would serve as prima-facie evidence of legal residence in Mexico. This documentation is reported to have been obtained through Fernando Roman Luye [sp?], Under Secretary of Immigration, and it is reported that he has been "paid off" by Stern.⁴⁸

Because the Bureau obtained this information through a "highly confidential and delicate source," Hoover asked the Assistant Attorney General not to discuss the matter outside of his division.

⁴⁶ FBI Teletype, Director to Legat Mexico, [Date withheld b1], 100-57453-962.

⁴⁷ Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, The Rosenberg File: A Search for the Truth (New York: Holt and Rhinehart, 1983), pp.137-138.

⁴⁸ FBI Memo, Hoover to AAG Tompkins, 3/27/1957, 100-57453-Check.

The Sterns settled in for a long stay. They rented a house and Alfred opened an office in Mexico City. Within two years, the Sterns began building a vacation home in Cuernavaca. Martha continued to host radical-chic parties as she kept in touch with the "intellectual and cultural leaders of Mexico" including: Pablo O'Higgins - Social Realist artist; Alfredo Zalce, David Alfaro Siqueiros - a Mexican Communist then jailed for his role in the plot to murder Trotsky; Diego Siqueiros - David's brother; and Ignacio Aguirre. The Sterns also entertained friends like, Howard Bibberman, Dalton Trumbo, and Albert Maltz, three of the Hollywood Ten, Leon Feuchtwanger -former German underground figure, and Cedric Belfrage who left the United States under accusations of Soviet espionage too. These figures and/or events have been discussed earlier. Much to the Bureau's chagrin, the Sterns would not be easily dislodged from Mexico.

The Sterns largely avoided the FBI's terrors and mail covers by moving to Mexico in 1953 but they could not entirely lose the FBI. Bureau wiretaps and mail covers on Alfred's office remained effective in keeping track of Alfred's business dealings until he finally closed his New York office in 1953. FBI agents in Mexico periodically checked on the Sterns and Bureau informants including at least one high official in the Mexican government kept an eye on the Sterns' activities for the Bureau. The portions of the file withheld under the Freedom of Information Act release of the Stern case file prevent conclusions to be made on the role that contact with other foreign and domestic government agencies played in these matters, but the context and information that was released suggest that these entities played a significant role in the FBI investigation after the Sterns moved to Mexico.

Difficult though it was to monitor the Sterns, the FBI had several opportunities to arrest Martha and Alfred between 1954 and 1956. Periodically, the Sterns traveled back to the United States to visit Alfred's family, for business, or for medical reasons. Each time the Bureau weighed whether to seek the arrest of the Sterns or simply to monitor their stays in the United States. Each time continued surveillance won over prosecution. By the time the Department was ready to prosecute the Sterns in 1956, their long visits to the United States had ended and so the FBI lost the easy chance to arrest.

The first return visit occurred in 1954 when Alfred traveled back to New York to contest his mother's will. Charging that his sister Adah Greenebaum had exercised undue influence on his mother, Alfred hired his friend Vito Marcantonio to contest his mother's will. It was reported that Fanny Stern had greatly reduced the amount she left him in her will from what Alfred expected. Alfred believed his mother did this under the guidance of his sister because they detested his radical political views and activities. Fanny Stern left him \$10,000, presumably a small percentage of the actual estate; Martha was given a ring and a necklace. The vast bulk of the estate, though, went to others, including Alfred's sister, Alfred's son and daughter by his first marriage, his adopted son Bobby, and Alfred's nieces and nephews. A trust was set up for Mrs. Stern's grandchildren. Alfred eventually settled with his sister for an additional \$9,500 and dropped his suit.

The Sterns also journeyed back to the United States to shop and to visit doctors. They sought the comforts and quality medical care that Mexico could not provide. Being something of a hypochondriac, Alfred received more than regular medical exams and frequently went to doctors to check minor problems. At one point, the Bureau considered using informants in Mexico to plant the idea in Alfred's thoughts that he had contracted

some ailment for which he needed treatment in the United States. The agent suggesting this thought it might bring the Sterns back to the US for trial. The plan was neither enacted, nor suggested again. Martha and Alfred visited the Los Angeles area to see family, doctors and shops, four times between 1954 and 1956. On each of these trips, the Bureau closely monitored their activities.

Most of these trips were related to the illness of Alfred's daughter Adele "Delly" Rosenwald Rome who was diagnosed with cancer during 1955 and died in October 1956.⁴⁹ The Sterns spent time with her and her family at various stages during her illness. Many of the Bureau's reports during 1955/1956 dealt with the Sterns' activities while visiting "Delly." Alfred obsessively sought the advice and help of cancer experts throughout the country, finding out about the latest therapies and seeking advice to give to Delly's caretakers. She died in October 1956; the Sterns did not return to the United States again after her death

Although the Bureau's extensive surveillance of the Sterns as they awaited Delly's death appears unseemly, the tesurs did develop some interesting information about the ideological commitment of its subjects. For example, the Bureau overheard Martha and Alfred discussing the "revelations" Nikita Khrushchev made to the Soviet Politburo in February 1956 where he admitted Stalin's atrocities. Although this event catalyzed a number of "Kronstadts" for many Communists at that time, it did not have such an effect on the Sterns. Alfred thought that in five years time it would be possible to evaluate the criticism of Stalin with some perspective, presumably placing Khrushchev's remarks in

⁴⁹ Alfred's sister Adah Greenebaum died the same day. Report, Chicago, 7/30/1957, 100-57453-1895.

alight more favorable to the dead tyrant. Martha agreed; she thought that there had to be another side to the matter that the Soviets could not talk about yet:

that is why in this period of all out armaments and war preparations they have determined that this is the way to make peace with the remaining so-called Capitalist countries that are peripheral, you know, actually ...the French. I mean they're just giving poor old Joe the works.⁵⁰

Her political beliefs do not appear to have changed from the time of her argument with Arvid Harnack almost twenty years earlier.⁵¹

While the FBI monitored these activities, related investigations continued. In February 1954, the Bureau pulled off a problematic coup. Between January 12, 1954 and February 2, 1954, Alfred had visited his office in New York, closed it, and packed up his business papers and other effects for shipment to Mexico. Learning of his plans, New York agents arranged through the Customs Department to examine the Sterns' files. Bureau photographers took over 9,000 photographs of items Alfred was shipping.

Much of the evidence was of interest to the Bureau. Direct evidence of the Sterns' friendship with Jane Foster emerged. Detailed information about Alfred's finances and many of his other contacts was found, including documents confirming Alfred's business relationship with Morros surfaced in the files. A 1946 letter from Bill Dodd to Martha mentioned that Michael Vavilov, a new employee in the Soviet Embassy in Washington, wanted to meet the Sterns. The Bureau thought it had learned who the Sterns' second

⁵⁰ Report, New York, 6/20/1956, 100-57453-1090.

⁵¹ See Chapter 2, p.96.

contact with Soviet intelligence was. Many other details about the Sterns' lives and actions also emerged from this treasure trove.⁵²

The information, though, would most likely not be admissible in any prosecution of the Sterns and could even prejudice any case brought against them. Worried about this possibility, the SAC of New York suggested that the Director should pose a "hypothetical" case to the Department of Justice for a legal opinion. He wanted Headquarters to ask DOJ if obtaining information from documents being shipped might be validly done under the Export Control Act [50 USC 2022], a law which assigned the Customs Department to exercise vigilance re national security.⁵³ Because the Department made no reference to this information in its brief note on evidence against the Sterns [see below], it appears that they held the search to be improper and the evidence secured unusable in court.

Because even Alfred's New York office was now relocated in Mexico, all of the original surveillance tools employed against the Sterns in September 1947 were discontinued. The wiretaps and mail covers on his office were the last to be shut down. The difficulty in monitoring the Sterns activities increased greatly even as the Bureau strove to maintain as close a watch on them as possible. The primary means of doing so was through informants; because the Bureau's FOIA releases tend to protect heavily these sources, little may be said about their effectiveness. Little of their activity in Mexico,

⁵² FBI Memo, New York to the Director 7/16/1954, 100-57453-1014; FBI Memo, Legat Mexico to the Director, 7/5/1956. Within a week, Hoover posed the hypothetical to AAG Tompkins [Memo, Hoover to Tompkins, 7/23/1954, 100-57453-1021.

⁵³ FDI Memo, New York to the Director, 7/16/1954, 100-57453-1014.

their business activities, and their social relationships became known to the FBI and when it came time to bring the Sterns in for prosecution, the Bureau could not reach them.

During the summer of 1956, Headquarters decided to turn the MOCASE investigation results over to the Internal Security Division of the Department of Justice. The Department quickly decided that there was sufficient evidence to prosecute Jack and Myra Soble but made no immediate decision on the other six principles. In August, Morros returned from Europe where he had recently met with Jack Soble and Soviet authorities. The Department was not ready to proceed because Soble remained out of the country so Morros returned to Europe until December. Upon returning a second time, he was introduced to the prosecutors.⁵⁴ Initial decisions on who to prosecute beside the Sobles and Albam were not made until then. In January 1957, U.S. Attorney Thomas Gilchrist impaneled a grand jury and Boris Morros was brought before it to tell his story.

Part of the delay occurred because Justice was rightly concerned about Morros as witness. Assistant Attorney General Tompkins asked the Bureau for "available information concerning Boris Morros which would reflect on his credibility" and for information "as to compensation or expense money furnished to Morros." Justice also wanted to interview Morros before moving forward on the case. In November 1956, the Bureau reported on Justice's request about Morros's *bona fides*. Morros, the Director reported, had been found untruthful in three situations.

⁵⁴ The dramatic story Morros told in the Look Magazine article and in My Ten Years about his life being in danger to the very end and the FBI notifying him to flee with the code-word, "CINERAMA," appear to be the results of artistic license. Morros, My Ten Years as a Counterspy, p.244. The 1961 movie based on Morros's book, "Man on a String" starred Ernest Borgnine as Morros.

First, Morros did not make a full disclosure in his initial interviews in July 1947. This, though, would not have been too significant in either the eyes of the Department or the FBI. The second incident was more problematic. It did not appear to implicate Morros's veracity, but it raised a question about his memory. In January 1955, Morros told his FBI handlers that he had met with Jane Foster in Paris in November 1954. Zlatovsky, though, was known to be in the United States at the time and could not have met with Morros. Even when "repeatedly interrogated" about this, Morros maintained that he remembered meeting her. Agents thought Morros was confusing this with a meeting several months earlier and so did not appear overly concerned.⁵⁵

The third incident, though, directly called into question Morros's reliability, at least his personal honesty. Morros had obtained the score to the opera "War and Peace" from his Soviet intelligence contacts who, he said, had told he could use it as he saw fit. When Morros tried to exploit the opera for gain in the United States, the Leeds Music Company of New York claimed it had title to the piece from the composer Prokofiev. Morros forged certain documents to show that he had been granted the rights to produce the piece and gave them to his attorney. His attorney presented them to the complainant; Morros claimed he had told his attorney not to use the documents, a ludicrous claim on the face of it.⁵⁶

To make matters worse, the Leeds Music Company filed a complaint with the FBI about Morros, then an undercover, double agent, thus creating a serious problem for the Bureau. The Bureau notified Deputy Attorney General Rogers in July 1955 about the

⁵⁵ FBI Memo, Hoover to AAG William F. Tompkins, 11/9/1956, Boris M. Morros, et al., Espionage-R, 100-202315-NR.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

matter. The agents explained Morros's relationship to and cooperation with the Bureau. Morros had reluctantly agreed to make restitution to the company in the sum of \$40,000 and Rodgers advised that since Morros made restitution, obtained "a release" from the complainant, and it would be "practically impossible" to prove interstate transportation of stolen property in the matter, the matter "should be considered closed."⁵⁷

Allegations were also made concerning Morros's relations with the USIA in Vienna and a firm called "Metal Import Trust of Zurich" but the Bureau found no reason to doubt Morros on these matters.⁵⁸ Actually, evidence in the State Department Correspondence files from 1955 to 1957, statements Morros made in his memoir, My Ten Years as a Counterspy, and other information suggests that Morros may have had dealings with the Metal Import Trust of Zurich and so been untruthful to the Bureau in that matter too.⁵⁹

For the Bureau (and the Department of Justice), these three incidents were not enough to call into question the vast bulk of the FBI's relationship with Morros. His testimony had been corroborated by Venona, Agent observations of Morros, both with his knowledge and without, and information developed in numerous other FBI investigations. In the memo describing the incidents where Morros was untruthful,

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ State Department, October 7, 1955, 102.7961/10-755, Record Group 59, National Archives and Records Administration. Boris Morros with Charles Samuel, My Ten Years as a Counterspy (New York: Viking, 1959).

Director Hoover mentioned that a second memo (not yet released through FOIA) would detail the evidence that corroborated Morros's claims.⁶⁰

Hoover lastly to Assistant Attorney General Tompkins that between 1950 and 1956, Morros received \$12,955.18 from the FBI; \$1,500 of this total was loaned to Morros with a promise of repayment. These expenses covered Morros's travel to Europe eight times and to Toronto once. The Bureau believed that Morros had laid out more money than had been given to him in the course of his association with the Bureau. Concluding, the Director noted that Morros was due back from Europe shortly after November 15 at which time arrangements would be made for Justice Department Attorneys to interview him.⁶¹ The Justice Department moved quickly over the holiday season to develop its cases against the MOCASE subjects.

For Jack and Myra Soble, the proverbial knock at the door came at 6:00 A.M. on January 25, 1957.⁶² Agents arrested Jacob Albam around the same time.⁶³ When the accused learned that Morros was their principal accuser at their arraignment, they were devastated.⁶⁴ The Sobles and Albam pled guilty within weeks of their arrests. Jack was sentenced to 15 years, cooperated with the Bureau while in jail, and was released in seven

⁶⁰ FBI Memo, Director to AAG Tompkins, 11/9/1956, 100-202315-NR.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² New York Journal American, 20 November 1957.

⁶³ On Albam and his role in MOCASE, see Chapter .

⁶⁴ Correspondence between Soble and Morros and Morros's testimony indicate that Jack thought Morros his friend. The correspondence referred to may be found in the U.S. Attorney's files on the Soble Case, 60 C.R. 996, Northeast Branch, NARA. Having been pushed aside by Soviet intelligence, Soble set his hope on opening a business with Morros, and/or using his connections to ingratiate himself with his superiors. Morros humored his desires but had no intention or means to fulfill them.

years.⁶⁵ Myra and Albam each received five-year sentences; neither served a full term. Myra Soble received a full pardon from President Bush in 1990.

Within a week of the arrests of the Sobles and Albam, the U.S. Consul served Martha and Alfred with subpoenas demanding their appearance on March 14 before a grand jury of the Southern District of New York. The Sterns' tapped William O'Dwyer, the brother of a former New York City mayor, to represent them. O'Dwyer immediately petitioned the court to quash the subpoenas because of problems with their service. He argued that:

it was supposed to have been accomplished by a tender of the necessary funds to pay for their transportation herein accordance with provisions of the statute. Unfortunately the consul misunderstood the requirement that was necessary in connection with the service and with the tender and did not make the tender legal in effect.⁶⁶

The court issued new subpoenas and better directions for the U. S. Marshals to follow.

The Marshals served these new subpoenas to the Sterns and gave each several hundred dollars for travel costs and the per diem allowance for their testimony before the grand jury. O'Dwyer again moved to have these quashed on grounds related to the Sterns' political status in Mexico and the vagaries of serving persons in another country. Losing this battle, Martha and Alfred appealed to the Supreme Court. In June, they were denied *certiorari*. At this point, the court had already found the Sterns in contempt for failing to appear and they were fined \$25,000 each. The Sterns continued to fight both the subpoenas and the contempt charges.

⁶⁵ Boris Morros, My Ten Years as a Counterspy, p.245.

⁶⁶ Stenographer's Minutes, 4/25 and 5/1 1957, before the Honorable Richard H. Levett, In the matter of issuance of subpoena on Alfred Kaufman Stern, ... (and another case). US District Court, Southern District of New York, p.3. Transcript may be found at Northeastern Branch, NARA, U.S. Attorneys Files, RG 118, Number 17880.

Because it was still unclear to the government whether the Sterns would cooperate, the Bureau again delayed launching a full-scale criminal investigation of the Sterns in aimed at developing evidence with which to accuse the Sterns in court. The FBI thought such an investigation would interfere with the Sterns' appearance before the grand jury. It would suggest they were official criminal targets, rather than needed witnesses in a broader investigation. In other words, the Bureau was more interested in the Sterns' testimony than prosecution per se, although it desired both.

Earlier that year, the Bureau had faced similar problems. In a telegram to the New York SAC dated February 26, 1957, Hoover directed the office not to interview a prior employee of the Sterns as the "Bureau does not desire to be in position to interfere." Hoover continued:

[The] Department attorney has previously indicated that testimony showing Sterns contacts with Soviet officials and indicating the Sterns were cognizant of their official status might be sufficient to include Sterns as defendants in espionage conspiracy. NY suggested logical persons to offer such testimony are domestics and close associates. Bureau believes some interviews with some employees may be safely conducted, Review, submit recommendations.⁶⁷

The Sterns' closest friends, family, and business acquaintances would not be interviewed for several more months.

Lab work and other investigative operations, though, continued. A copy of a typewritten report titled "The Indonesian Independence Movement" and typewriting specimens obtained from a typewriter of the Sterns and one of Jane Foster's were submitted to the Laboratory Division for comparison analysis. The Bureau might have

⁶⁷ 100-57453-1269.

obtained a copy of Jane's old OSS report from the State Department or the CIA.⁶⁸ The typewriting specimens were obtained from an individual who had possession of them in June of 1957.⁶⁹ It was hoped that the two samples were typed on the same machine thus indicating that a key link between the Sterns and Jane Foster could be shown in court. Neither typescript sample matched the report's typescript.

The debate about how to bring the Sterns from Mexico to the United States also continued, this time with input from the Department of Justice. In a memo to Assistant Attorney General Tompkins, Hoover indicated that he thought returning the Sterns would be a distinct problem. "Inasmuch as the Sterns have received publicity" in this matter and have been residents of Mexico for several years "it is not known if Mexican authorities would take action against them."⁷⁰ The CIA also maintained a close eye on this matter. In an April 1957 Memo, a CIA station in Mexico sent a copy of an article from *Excelsior* about the efforts of Mexican attorney Luis Sanchez Pontons to travel to the US to argue for the release of Morton Sobell. The CIA agent noted that "'contacts' of the local FBI representative" had taken Sobell to the border without knowledge of the Mexican government. In conclusion, the memo writer noted that the item was sent because of the

⁶⁸ After the OSS was shut down, its records passed first to the State Department, then to the CIA. They are now largely available at the National Archives and Records Administration.

⁶⁹ FBI Memo, [b7C] to Mr. D. J. Parsons, 3/20/1957, 100-57453-Check. In Memo, NY to Director, att. Laboratory, 6/28/1957, the source of the two samples is protected with a (b)(7)(C) exemption indicating a live source.

⁷⁰ FBI Memo, Hoover to Tompkins, March 13, 1957, 100-57453-Check.

attack on the FBI and the "present considerations of means of getting Martha and Alfred STERN into the USA."⁷¹

Facing these difficulties over returning the Sterns to America for trial, a State official suggested bringing President Eisenhower into the matter. It was proposed that the President send a personal letter via Ambassador Hill to Mexican President Ruiz Cortines concerning the Stern case and asking for his personal intervention in the matter.⁷² It does not appear that this action was taken and there is no record of how far the proposal rose before it was quashed.

The Bureau also had problems with the Zlatovskis at that time. Jane and George were then in France and taking full advantage of the French legal system to avoid extradition. A memo from A. H. Belmont to L. V. Boardman on March 12, 1957 illustrated the problem. The Zlatovskis would not leave France to return to the United States. Nor would the French deport them because they considered espionage a political crime. Furthermore, Jane and George had approached the French seeking asylum and it appeared that the French were willing to entertain the idea. Belmont suggested that the Department might offer to grant immunity to the Zlatovskis in return for their testimony as a condition for granting them asylum assuming the French were willing. The Director reacted strongly to this suggestion. Commenting in the margin, Hoover wrote:

I desire henceforth that we not offer suggestions such as this.... It is solely for the Department to work out ... There must be greater care upon the part of Bureau representatives not to get the FBI involved in purely Departmental procedures⁷³. [emphasis in original]

⁷¹ CIA Memo, 4/25/1957, Case Number F-1975-00144.

⁷² State Department Files, 711.3512/7-1757, NARA.

⁷³ FBI Memo, Belmont to Boardman, 3/12/1957, 100-57453-Check.

As it became apparent that the Sterns were not returning, the Bureau moved forward with those aspects of its investigation that had been on hold for many years. Within days, San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles began covering leads that were ignored before. Persons Alfred contacted in Los Angeles when he and Soble met with Morros in 1944 and 1945 were interviewed. Friends and correspondents of the Sterns were sought. Agents carried photos of the various MOCASE subjects, showing as many as fifteen or twenty to an interviewee with the hope of connecting one of the pictured intelligence agents to the Sterns.

It is clear that the case against the Sterns' would not have been quite the blockbuster that the Rosenberg prosecution was. Atomic espionage was barely a passing matter in this case and the charges could not have been inflated to a call for the death penalty. U. S. Attorney Gilchrist planned to prosecute the Sterns for conspiracy to commit espionage. A brief handwritten note in the U. S. Attorney's file on the case indicated three major pieces of evidence for the case against the Sterns:

1. Infor & g.j. [Informant and Grand Jury] testimony from Boris Morros re cover co. [company].
2. Statement from Jane Zlatovski re knowledge of Sterns' of Jane's passing rept. [report] on Indonesia to Jack [Soble].
3. Statement from Jack S. [Soble] re Sterns knowledge of (1) and (2) above.⁷⁴

The aim of the prosecution would be to show that the Sterns were members of a conspiracy to commit espionage. Testimony from principles in the case, not only

⁷⁴ Undated, Handwritten Note, US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Record Group 118, Case Files, Case No. 17880, Martha and Alfred Stern Case, Espionage and Contempt of Court, National Archives and Records Branch, New York. The format of the note has been altered to better present its content, spelling though is according to the original.

Morros, but also Jane Foster and Jack Soble, would be needed. From the note it is clear DOJ hoped to cut a deal with Jane Foster and, perhaps, offer Jack Soble a reduced sentence for implicating the Sterns. The list was short because much of the evidence the Bureau gathered was inadmissible in court.

The Bureau had been burned several years earlier in the case of Judith Coplon. Coplon was a young support employee in the Justice Department who passed on DOJ and FBI material to her case officer Valentin Gubitchev, a Soviet embassy employee. The Bureau first learned of Coplon through a Venona intercept that identified an agent named SIMA in the Department of Justice. When the Bureau learned through a series of wiretaps that Coplon planned a meeting with Gubitchev, a stakeout was set up and she was caught red-handed with Gubitchev and a purse full of FBI originated documents.

Although the arrests successfully neutralized this agent and her case officer, the subsequent prosecution failed because of the role that wiretaps played in learning about this meeting. Today, the Bureau certainly could have made the case that they had probable cause for the wiretaps. Then, the Bureau was unwilling to compromise Venona. At the time of Coplon's arrest, a number of investigations based on information from this source were open; MOCASE was one of these. To introduce information about this cryptographic success would have warned the Soviets of the success of the NSA and the Bureau; on the other hand, the Soviets had already changed their codes and so the point appears moot. The wiretaps themselves may still have been struck down because they were generally inadmissible as evidence in federal court at the time. In the end, Coplon was convicted twice. In each case, the guilty verdict was overturned because of the violation of Coplon's Fifth Amendment right against unwarranted search and seizure.

Wiretaps, mail covers, and surreptitious entries would have been a significant problem in any prosecution of the Sterns although the Bureau certainly had probable cause for employing these methods. Initial interest in the Sterns, though, came from the revelations of a live witness, Boris Morros. Likewise, the testimony of Jane Foster and Jack Soble would further distance the evidence against the Sterns from investigative methods that would have been illicit as evidence. The evidence in any Stern prosecution could be developed from sources that did not produce so-called "poisoned fruit;" the case against Martha and Alfred was much better suited to prosecution than the Coplon one had been.

If the Stern defense sought to link the Bureau's interest in Morros to methods that could not stand-up in court as the Coplon defense had when it pursued the FBI's use of wiretaps, it would ultimately discover the anonymous letter involved in the COMRAP investigation. The letter - classified Top Secret at the time - accused Zubilin, Morros, and others of being spies. Although an anonymous tip, the letter was certainly a piece of evidence suitable to provide probable cause to investigate Morros in the first place. It led directly to the investigation of the Sterns. The testimony of Morros, Soble, or Zlatovsky did not follow from an unacceptable source, hence, they might have been strong witnesses against the Sterns. The chance that the government would have released the letter, though, was slim.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ If necessary, it is possible, though not probable, that the Bureau would have been willing to use the letter in court. Unlike Venona, which, apparently, was kept secret from President Truman, and even the CIA at first, the investigations sparked by the anonymous letter about Zubilin were all well advanced. It provided no information about United States cryptographic or counterintelligence policy and there was no obvious reason to protect this evidence, except perhaps, under an argument against compromising a witness. The letter was not declassified until 7/10/1996 as part of the official release of the Venona Decrypts. Robert Louis Benson and Michael Warner, ed. Venona: Soviet

Another factor of concern for the prosecution were ongoing changes in American legal culture at the time. Although the Smith Act prosecutions of the top CPUSA leaders had been upheld by the Supreme Court in 1950, changes in the Court's makeup and reaction to the excesses of McCarthy and the execution of the Rosenbergs had soured many on media driven spy trials.⁷⁶ Given the Sterns' money, background, and connections, they would have put up a fierce fight that they might have won even though they were guilty of participating with Soviet intelligence in violation of several U.S. laws. In the end, the Department of Justice thought it had a strong case and willingly brought charges against the many subjects of MOCASE, including the Sterns.

As the Justice Department resolved these issues, evidence was presented to the grand jury that had been sitting since January 1957. While it sat, the Sobles and Jacob Albam were sentenced and began cooperating. Sometime in the spring, Jack and Myra Soble testified before the grand jury as their former partner Morros had done the previous January. The grand jury sat through the spring and into the summer hearing evidence.

The seriousness of the FBI's investigation had been apparent to the Sterns several months earlier. In April, Martha received a letter from her cousin, Richard Johns, then a chemistry professor at Vassar College. Although Martha tried to play off their court battles in earlier letters, it was clear that Johns was scared. He wrote:

This [radio broadcast] tonight is the first "publicity" I've heard of you and Alfred. I love you dearly, and so far as your personal business, political views and so on are concerned, they are none of my business. While I am

Espionage and the American Response, 1939-1957(Washington, D.C., National Security Agency and Central Intelligence Agency, 1996), pp.51-52.

⁷⁶ Susan Siggelakis, "Advocacy on Trial," The American Journal of Legal History 36, 1992.

a stout anti-McCarthyite, I can pass no judgement on something I know nothing about ...the "nasty business."⁷⁷

Martha replied:"

Don't worry -- I know you are not a Communist. I am not either, nor is Alfred. We were asked simply to come to a Grand Jury to testify -- nothing more complicated than that and our lawyers advised me not to. They are handling the case well and will appeal it all along the line.⁷⁸

The FBI, apparently, did not know how close Martha was to her cousin, because the interview did not fit with Hoover's directive about holding off on interviewing those close to the Sterns.

At this point, the Sterns began considering leaving Mexico. Weinstein and Vassiliev note that Martha and Alfred met with a Soviet contact named OSTAP, the Mexico City KGB chief, on "June 16, 1956 [sic]."⁷⁹ At the time, they asked for permission to live in the Soviet Union, but if that was not possible, then Czechoslovakia, China, or the German Democratic Republic. They were in the process of transferring their funds from the Bank of Mexico to a Swiss account.⁸⁰

On July 1, it returned an indictment of three counts against the Sterns; several days later the Zlatovskis were also indicted. By then the Sobles, too, were beginning to cooperate with the authorities. At first, the grand jury kept the charges under seal as it

⁷⁷ Letter, 4/25/1957, Richard Johns to Martha Dodd Stern, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁷⁸ Letter, 5/7/1957, Martha Dodd Stern to Richard Johns, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. Richard Johns had a mental breakdown within a month of this letter and the Sterns lost touch with him as they were no longer in Mexico.

⁷⁹ 1957 would appear to be the correct date.

⁸⁰ Allen Weinstein and Alexei Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America (New York: Random House, 1999), p.70.

was hoped that both fugitive parties could be returned to U.S. custody before the charges were announced. With indictments at the ready, the Bureau began to interview all possible sources no matter how close to the Sterns unless it was thought there was no chance the person would provide information to the Bureau. Reports of these interviews quickly reached the Sterns as friends and family asked them what was happening. More importantly for the Sterns, a friend of theirs in the Mexican government appears to have tipped them off about the sealed indictment. The U.S. Government most likely told its Mexican counterparts of the indictment to gain leverage in demanding the extradition of the Sterns; it backfired.⁸¹

During the night of July 20, 1957, a Paraguayan family named Escomilla (as reported in the papers at the time) - father, mother, and teen-age son - boarded a flight from Mexico City to Canada, and then to Prague, Czechoslovakia. To avoid the prospect of jail time, or, as they put it, "a frame-up," the Sterns had fled with false passports and fake identities. According to some FBI sources, they had paid \$15,000 each for these passports; Weinstein and Vassiliev report the total amount as \$10,000.⁸² Jack Soble mused from his jail cell to an FBI agent that he thought the Sterns could have gotten them much more cheaply from other South American countries.⁸³

In August, Morros, the inveterate self-promoter, made the front page of several major newspapers on several different days as he testified before both the House and the Senate about his role as a double agent. Teasing his audience with vague references over

⁸¹ Letter, Alfred Stern to Moses B. Sherr, 7/16/1957.

⁸² Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood, p.70.

⁸³ FBI Report, New York, 6/6/1959, 100-57453-2231.

several days, Morros finally identified the Sterns as Soviet agents. He soon identified the Zlatovskis as well. His revelations came in testimony to the House Committee on Un-American Activities and the Senate Internal Security Committee. Although his revelations, might have lent themselves to many of the charges Joseph McCarthy leveled at about Communist infiltration in the government, the Bureau would not have risked their informant earlier on such a risky proposal. Instead, Morros had been used as a double-agent for as long as he was considered effective.

At 11:55 a.m., September 9, 1957, the court unsealed the three-count indictment of Martha and Alfred Stern. The first count charged the Sterns with conspiracy to violate the wartime espionage statute - 18 U.S.C. 794, maximum penalty, death. The second count charged the Sterns with conspiracy to violate the peacetime espionage statute, 18 U.S.C. 793, maximum penalty, 10 years and/or \$10,000 fine. The final count charged the Sterns with conspiring to act as agents of the Soviet Government without prior notification of the Secretary of State, 18 U.S.C. 951, maximum penalty, five years and/or \$10,000 fine.

The indictment laid out a conspiracy described in forty-seven overt acts. To summarize: In or about 1940, Lavrenti Beria called Soble to a meeting and assigned him to work with Soviet intelligence. Arriving in the United States, Soble reported to Vasilli Zubilin, the *rézident*. When Zubilin left the United States in March of 1944, Soble took over supervision of the Boris Morros Music Company, an operation that aimed to provide cover for several Soviet spies. The company was run by Boris Morros and financed by Alfred Stern; both men reported to Jack Soble. Although disputes between Alfred and Boris led to the end of their partnership, the conspiracy begun by Jack Soble and Lavrenti

Beria continued. Martha Stern suggested the recruitment of Jane Foster to Jack Soble. Jane and her husband, George, were both recruited and subsequently met with representatives from Soviet intelligence services in Europe including Soble. The last act noted by the grand jury occurred in June 1955 when Alfred Stern received a note from Jack Soble. The grand jury learned of these actions primarily through the testimony of Boris Morros and Jack Soble.⁸⁴ It also made use of testimony of Jane Foster given to an earlier grand jury to which she had told the story about giving Soble her OSS and, presumably, FBI agents involved in the various stages of the investigation.

The Bureau had taken a significant amount of time in the early 1950's considering which informants (live and non-live) might be available for the prosecution of the Sterns. This shows in the overt acts charged to the Sterns and their fellow-conspirators in the indictment. The financial details about the Boris Morros Music Company would have come from Alfred's accountants and bankers who were subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury. Bureau agents who accompanied Morros when he acted as a double agent would have reported on the European activities of the Sobles, the Zlatovskis, and Morros. Evidence of the letter Stern received from Soble appears to have come from either Bureau surveillance or a Bureau informant who could be called to testify in Court, if not Jack Soble himself. The U.S. Attorney had more than sufficient, corroborative evidence to support the charges made by the grand jury. The Sterns would likely have been convicted.

This could not happen. The Sterns had been in Czechoslovakia for more than a month before the indictment was unsealed. They would spend the next three decades in

⁸⁴ FBI Memo, Belmont to Boardman, 9/9/1957, 100-57453-1962.

the East Bloc, at first chasing "young revolutions" but later becoming so disillusioned with the "will-o-the-wisp" in which they had placed their faith that they faced their own "Kronstadts." The tragedy of Alfred's last fifteen years and Martha's last twenty years is described in the final chapter.

Chapter 8

Chasing Young Revolutions, 1957-1991

Press Release

With Morros' revelations during August 1957 making front page news throughout the United States, the Sterns anticipated the announcement of their indictment with a September 6 press conference from Prague. That Martha composed the complaint is obvious from the style and language of the statement released to the Czech Press. In this rhetorical *tour de force*, she unleashed a harangue against the United States and its 'fascist' practices, repeating the themes of her earlier works.

We have been subjected to "a campaign of character assassination, a barrage of scurrilous propaganda," Martha railed. "We feel compelled to reply." Morros' accusations are "fantastic inventions of a Hollywood imposter" employed by a U.S. government trying to "destroy or silence those people who dare dissent." The charges, she explained, were Morros's revenge. Martha said that she and Alfred had met him while working on producing a movie based on her memoir and the Diary. The fantasies "of this self-declared friend of the 'mad monk' Rasputin" are fueled by his "feeling of revenge" against us. He blamed the Sterns for the failure of his music company when, in fact, its failure was a result of his "incompetence." Through attacks on progressives like us, Martha continued, the FBI and its "lickspittles" - Congress and the U.S. Attorney's

Office - have adopted the Gestapo approach of using "spy scares and *auto da fés* ...to further the Nazi objectives whenever there was a murmur of dissent."¹

Our history and "progressive background," Martha continued, are well known and fully open. "We are proud to be in the United States' tradition of protest and dissent. She then claimed they were "proud to have participated actively in the New Deal, in the entire Roosevelt era when Jeffersonian democrats like Ambassador William E. Dodd and others had the courage to stand against the early growth of fascism, to defy the appeasement of the State Department, to make American democracy a living, changing and growing force."

It was for this that the U.S. government endlessly persecuted them, Martha claimed. And so they fled to Mexico, but soon realized that we were still in "the protective custody" of the United States. They had to flee again. That these charges come out now was because the Sterns' long, progressive records "could easily 'make the press'." "The ruling groups in the United States," she concluded, are "deathly afraid" of "peaceful economic and political competition with the socialist countries." These groups are "now coming after us as they drive inexorably to war."

Perks and Pomp

Having been denied Soviet citizenship, Martha and Alfred settled in Prague soon after fleeing Mexico. The beauty and culture of the old city appealed to them. When they first arrived in Prague in July 1957, Jiri Hajek, a rising figure in Czech politics, was

¹ Czechoslovakia News Agency, Information Bulletin, 9/6/1957, vol.2, no.73, Press Release of Mrs. Martha Dodd Stern and Mr. Alfred K. Stern in Prague, copy in 100-57453-2045.

assigned to see that they acclimated well.² Hajek acted as the Sterns' personal factotum. He secured a luxury apartment, a chauffeured Mercedes, a staff of several servants, opera tickets, etc. In a brief postcard to Henry Wallace, the Sterns reported "we are happy here;" Wallace immediately turned the card over to the FBI.³

Martha and Alfred traveled widely in the East Bloc and received similar treatment wherever they went. When visiting Moscow, an old friend and case officer from Martha's years in Germany, Evgeny Gnedin, played the same role Hajek did in Prague. Gnedin was the only ranking member of the Soviet Embassy in 1930's Berlin to survive. Even then he had been jailed and exiled for much of the 1950's and only rehabilitated after Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin. Gnedin helped Martha to meet people in Moscow and acted as a liaison for her with the Soviet publishing industry. Martha would send Gnedin articles for groups like the Young Communists League journal and expect him to find a way to use them.⁴ The Soviet Union during the first several years of the Sterns' exile published Martha's novels and other books in Russian, a sign of her renown and importance to communist public relations (with the west).

The other East Bloc countries provided a similar welcome for the expatriate Americans. For many years, the Sterns traveled in luxury behind the Iron Curtain. Their summer vacations on the Bulgarian coast were arranged by Kuzman Manolov of the *Comité National de la Paix en Bulgarie*. Manolov acted not only as the Sterns' travel

² Hajek later became the Czech Representative to the United Nations in the 1970's.

³ See Chapter 7, p.247.

⁴ Letter, April 2, 1963, Martha Dodd to Evgeny Gnedin, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

agent but also as a publishing agent for Martha's articles.⁵ In each place they visited, Martha and Alfred found that they were assigned an East Bloc official to assist them in obtaining preferential treatment, acquiring luxuries they missed, and acquiring tickets or invitations to cultural and political events they wished to attend.

Their special status allowed them to seek favors for their friends as well. In 1962, Martha wrote the Chinese cultural attaché in Prague:

Dear Comrade Ssu Ping: I would like to recommend John Howard Lawson as a possible guest of China. He was one of America's most famous progressive film writers.... He spent one year in jail in the USA as one of the Hollywood 10... He is a fine comrade, with a revolutionary outlook, loyal and steady in vision. He would, I feel sure, benefit from a visit to China and could certainly be useful there as well. Naturally his trip would have to be kept confidential.⁶

An invitation such as this would have secured Lawson VIP treatment, honoraria for his speeches, royalties for productions based on his work, perhaps even a publishing contract. The Sterns' connections could be rewarding.

Martha and Alfred greatly appreciated these perks and came to expect them much as they had in America. Still, they could not do everything they wished. When Martha and Alfred asked to meet with Anthony Burgess and Donald Maclean, British nationals who spied for the Soviets and were forced to flee to the USSR to avoid arrest in 1951, they were denied permission.⁷ The Sterns wanted to question their fellow exiles about their views on life in the Soviet Union. Burgess and Maclean found life in the Soviet

⁵ Letter, December 20, 1961, Kuzman Manolov to Alfred and Martha Stern, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁶ May 11, 1962, Martha Dodd[?] to Ssu Ping, Cultural Attaché, Chinese Embassy, Prague, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁷ Allen Weinstein and Alexei Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America (New York: Random House, 1999), p.71.

Union a bitter disappointment and it is probable the Soviets did not want the Sterns having second thoughts on staying in the East for a while.

Invitations and honors for the Sterns, though, continued to come from all over the world through the mid-sixties. Martha wrote to British fellow-traveler D. N. Pritt that she and Alfred "saw Chairman Lai in Varna and he spoke fondly of you. He said you had described our case and he was so sympathetic and disgusted that he invited us forthwith to come to live in India!"⁸ Invitations also came from China, East Germany, and North Vietnam.

Young Revolutions

In spite of the welcome and favored treatment they received, the Sterns soon tired of the 'old' socialist world. The Soviet Union had not impressed them on their brief stopover en route to Prague. Nor did the hope and excitement they felt upon arriving in Prague stand up for long in the face of the reality of the East Bloc. Finding the older communist world disappointing, Martha and Alfred sought younger, fresher revolutions. They found one in Cuba.

We had last visited Cuba in 1951, the year that "was to witness the return of the master-butcher Batista..." Martha she wrote.⁹ Returning in 1963, the Sterns anticipated the changes wrought by a "death-defying people" "in its fiery struggle to be free." "Cuba," Martha gushed, created a "new revolutionary romanticism." Describing her joy with the island, Martha wrote Gnedin that she had found:

⁸ Letter, August 20, 1960, Martha Dodd to D. N. Pritt, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

⁹ "A Yankee in Cuba," 1962 to 63, p.5, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC

[a] new, lively, dewy-eyed Revolution, like the Soviet Revolution must have been in the years following 1917. What a refreshing experience it was!

Continuing, Martha expressed the hope that:

... they will never make the same mistakes that were made [in the USSR]. I think they will not experience the horror of the Stalin period because they are of the New World, and people over there are different. I mean Communists and other progressive people of course. In any case, we loved it and felt that we "belonged" there, something we have never felt before except in our own country. Europe is not our continent! And never can be.¹⁰

The Sterns initially stayed as Castro's guests for three and a half months between November 1962 and February 1963. After returning to Prague, with a brief stopover in Moscow, they returned and settled in Cuba for three and a half years between 1963 and 1967.

While in Cuba, the Sterns lived in the luxury penthouse of the Hotel Havana Libre and held court as they had in the United States and Mexico. Alfred advised the Cubans on large-scale housing; Martha wrote. Her 1964 article, "Hail and Farewell," applauded a visit to Cuba by a group of 84 American student members of the Progressive Labor Movement.¹¹ They were feted and pampered in Cuba as they were in Prague. Although they did not socialize with Castro, they did meet many of the major figures of the Cuban Revolution. Following the death of Che Guevara, Martha reminisced to Clarita Porret, a Cuban friend:

A terrible thing about Che. I remember well how you felt about him too, and that lovely, humorous and delightful chat you and we had with him at a

¹⁰ Letter, February 1, 1963, Martha Dodd to Evgeny Gnedin, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

¹¹ "Hail and Farewell," August 12, 1964, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. The article was published in several foreign periodicals according to this file.

party. How charming, modest, almost embarrassed, and thoughtful he was, and witty too. Despite the bright shiny words nothing can hide the emptiness that is felt here by everyone, and certainly by us too."¹²

Victor Rabinowitz, a radical lawyer from New York, saw the Sterns regularly while he represented Cuba in the United States during the 1960's. He remembered that "a visit to the Sterns [penthouse in the Hotel Libre Havana] was an opportunity to discuss all of the latest politics, all of the latest literature, all of the things that were happening in the United States."¹³

Cuba and Castro enthralled them; the promise she had once seen in Stalin and the Soviet Union had been renewed in the Americas. Martha wrote D. N. Pritt that:

We saw [Connie] Zilliacus [British MP] on his way home from Cuba. He and his wife were ecstatic! Who isn't? Fidel's speech to the women was a masterpiece. What a man, what a hero!¹⁴

In Cuba, the Sterns pursued their interests, met with old friends, and made new ones, and pressed their causes.

Martha's short articles written at this time denounced West German leader Conrad Adenauer as a fascist, lauded her old friend Paul Robeson, criticized the U.S. for its spy flights over Russia and for Francis Gary Powers ill-fated U-2 flight. In one polemic, Martha related a debate she had with an "old friend" over the present course of socialism. Her friend suggested that "if socialism hadn't looked down its nose at American blue jeans, its youth might now be more lively politically." Martha was:

¹² Letter, October 31, 1967, Martha Dodd to Clarita Porret, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

¹³ 11/19/1986, Memorial Meeting for Alfred K. Stern, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

¹⁴ Letter, January 21, 1963, Martha Dodd to D. N. Pritt, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. Zilliacus was a long time socialist and fellow-traveler. Pritt was too.

...so startled by his statement that [her] mouth must have dropped open and [her] eyes widened incredulously. [Her] Western Communist friend glanced around the room and admonished, "Don't look so dogmatic." "Let's leave out the epithets," [Martha] replied, still wondering how one could look dogmatic. "Do go on!"

She asked how would they buy them? Answer – import. Couldn't they make their own?

Answer – not as good looking or as strong. Martha responded:

Oh bunk ... have you forgotten that Americans were spouting the line of subverting and softening up the socialist countries from within, before the "kill"? That's still their line." He looked at [her], disgusted. "You talk like an old-time Bolshevik...."¹⁵

Martha remained the committed ideologue she had been when she argued with Arvid Harnack about the benevolence of Stalinism.

Martha and Alfred also made two extended visits to another young revolution, China. The Sterns first visited China in 1960; they returned for a longer stay in 1965. Their expectations of paradise were not disappointed (at first). There she found that:

[On] every block there are open markets of fruit and vegetables, huge hot chilies and green peppers, cauliflowers, squash, spinach, cabbages, potatoes, leeks and onions, apples and piles of tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, melons, peaches and many strange varieties of vegetables and fruit not known to Westerners, all to be purchased freely at ridiculously low prices. The abundance is so great the Chinese must rapidly develop their cannery industry to take care of the excess.¹⁶

They toured the country and reconnected with old friends like Frank and Ruth Coe and Edgar Snow. Martha's interview with Snow on the Chinese Revolution appeared in an

¹⁵ "Of Blue Jeans and Socialism," 1965, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

¹⁶ "China," 7/1965, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. Only three years before China had been in the grip of a man-made famine caused by the policies of Mao. Estimates based on demographic information from the Chinese government place the death toll of this famine at 30 million human lives [Jasper Becker, Hungry Ghosts: Mao's Secret Famine, (The Free Press; New York, 1996), p.xi]. The scene Martha describes is like those she described in her account of the Soviet Union in Through Embassy Eyes.

article called "The Daily Revolution."¹⁷ In each of her writings, mainly ideological travelogues at this time, Martha expressed the same enthusiasm and vision that she had applied to describing the Soviet Union in Through Embassy Eyes. The difference is that Martha was even less critical in these late writings than in her first.

While the Sterns "chased young revolutions," they developed friendships with several persons apparently connected with third world revolutionary movements. They counted as friends members of the Khmer Rouge like Meng Cheang Eng, representatives of the Vietcong like Comrade Ly Van Sau, and Arab nationalists like Abdullah Schleiffer, "strange and interesting and extraordinary friend." Although none of these persons was a high official, each was of enough importance that they were allowed to train in various Communist countries and were important enough to be introduced to the Sterns.¹⁸

The Sterns' friendship with Fred Jerome was like these other relationships and even much closer. Fred was the son V. J. Jerome, a "leading Communist pundit."¹⁹ In correspondence with him, Martha, and Alfred states that Fred's father had been a good friend of theirs.²⁰ Fred had traveled to Cuba as a member of the Socialist Workers' Party

¹⁷ "The Daily Revolution," 1962, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

¹⁸ Spelling of names and other information comes from correspondence of the Sterns in the Martha Dodd Papers.

¹⁹ Theodore Draper, The Roots of American Communism (New York: Viking Press, 1957), p.299.

²⁰ Correspondence with Communist leaders is absent from the Stern papers although it is known from both Lydia Marcus's diary and the FBI files that the Browder Brothers were friends of the Sterns as was Jerome.

with the group of students and met the Sterns there. The three struck up a friendship and maintained a regular correspondence when Fred returned to the United States.²¹

During the early 1970's Fred tracked down minor medical supplies the Sterns needed, clothes and assorted grooming items, and other sundry goods the Sterns desired but could not obtain in the East Bloc. Fred also pressed the Sterns' attorneys, Leonard Boudin and Victor Rabinowitz, to be more active in seeking the dismissal of charges that still stood against them before the Court of the Southern District of New York. Over the course of their friendship with Jerome, the Sterns' increasing demands and apparent ingratitude strained the relationship. Although they remained friends, the three grew apart. Nevertheless, Fred was present at a memorial service for Alfred in 1986 held at the home of Corliss Lamont in New York City.²²

Kronstadt

Tiring of Havana, the Sterns returned to Prague via Moscow in 1968. Martha's view of the Soviet Union had undergone a deep change in the thirty-four years since her first visit. She found in the Soviet Union a "corrupt and hypocritical atmosphere" where Russians "nearly crawl on their bellies when they see a foreigner, especially an American, and find all ways to try to beg a dollar." Returning to Czechoslovakia was a

²¹ See correspondence between Sterns and Fred Jerome in Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

²² Lamont was a philosophy professor at Colombia University, former editor of Soviet Russia Today, and a long-time fellow traveler. He befriended the Sterns through the Progressive Party. See 11/19/1986, Memorial Meeting for Alfred K. Stern, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

pleasure after witnessing the collapse of a significant part of the faith that had sustained them for thirty years.

Events soon after their return to Prague catalyzed the Sterns' Kronstadt. While they had been in Cuba, Czechoslovakia had begun to implement several changes in its political and economic policies aimed at increasing democracy and experimenting with some minor capitalist reforms. The changes instituted by the Dubcek government in Czechoslovakia worried Martha. She thought the Czechs appeared to be rejecting socialism, which "has never been tried anywhere except for a brief period during Lenin's time, and perhaps now in China." The Czechs had forgotten that they had considered the Russians as "natural friends", "liberators from the Nazis." "Six months of revisionist debauchery ("Prague Spring" they called it)," Martha continued, "had led to this amnesia." Still, hope was in the air as the Czechs tried "a neo-capitalist atmosphere in a "socialist" framework" and the Sterns later realized that they welcomed the breath of freedom.²³

"Prague Spring" agreed with the Sterns. Martha remembered later that she "felt free to talk" for the third time in 11 years under socialist rule of "various types:

The first time was when we arrived in 1957 in the CSSR and the USSR. For a few months, we pooh-poohed the idea of police surveillance. The second time was in Cuba from 1962-1964. Now of course we know better about all three times.

Around 7:00 a.m. on August 21, 1968, Bobby, then living in Mexico, reached his parents on the telephone from Cuba. "The Soviet tanks are in Prague," he said. Questioning him at first, the rumbling under their window quickly convinced Martha and Alfred that he was right. The Czechs were bewildered and did not know what to do. Their reform

²³ Diary, Chapter 20, August 1968, Box 12, File 26, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

efforts were crushed and a barrage of propaganda was launched to convince them that they should give up in the face of invasion.²⁴

The crushing of Prague Spring effectively trapped the Sterns in Czechoslovakia, in part because they too had "felt free to talk;" a secretary of theirs for many years in Prague noted that the Sterns had donated to one of the Czech democracy movements at the time.²⁵ Their experience prodded Martha to reflect on the lesson she learned.

I suppose it is a fatal weakness of intellectuals that they feel they must be able to express at least in talk their opinions whether or not they agree with the prevailing official ones. On the other hand, the human spirit, worker or intellectual, needs a little space to breathe in. And even non-party people of good intention should be able under the dictatorship of the proletariat to criticize and argue and discuss the points they disagree with. This to me, at least from afar, seems to be one of the great contributions of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

Some illusions had died, others, clearly, remained, but with the end of Prague Spring Martha's disillusionment began to grow. Martha tired of chasing "will-o-the-wisps" that turned into "wasps" as she told Donald Klopfer, "Now we are of course "non-persons" here which suits us well!"²⁶

Martha's "Kronstadt" did not result in a creative rebirth of her faith in democracy as Louis Fischer advocated in his essay in The God That Failed. Instead, it represented the collapse of her passions and hopes as her faith in a communist eschaton collapsed. While Martha chased "young revolutions," her writing suffered a slow death. For a time, she was able to turn out polemics attacking the West and paeans to the socialist world of

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Letters, Lilinka Sperlova to John Fox, 2/3/1997, 2/10/1997, 4/5/1997, and 11/2/1997.

²⁶ Letter, December 17, 1980, Martha Dodd to Klopfer, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC

which she dreamed. Her description of the Beijing markets cited above is one example; a reminiscence of her German years sparked by her return to Berlin in 1959 was another. In the German piece, she bemoaned her exile, mourned her family, all "prematurely dead – their lives shortened by strain and persecution," and her exile "because as anti-fascists sympathetic to socialism, we were driven from our own land."²⁷ Against this she portrayed the progress made by the East Germans in rebuilding their decimated nation. Her description was purely "social realism."

As her work declined in quality and quantity, Martha dreamed of several major projects. Each would reach the idea stage, perhaps she would even begin research, but then the project would fizzle. While in China, Martha thought of adding a nineteen-year update to The Searching Light; she did not begin it. Next, she wanted to write about the contemporary American scene, especially the civil rights struggle, but could not. Her excuse was that she could not research the American scene adequately.

Her most desired project was to be a memoir of those things she left out of Through Embassy Eyes, Winogradow, Harnack, and the German Underground. One section of the planned book, approximately fifty pages of the expected total, would detail Martha's relationship with Boris Winogradow. In the late 1960's, Martha began contacting old friends asking for their reminiscences of her old lover. To journalist Edgar Mowrer she wrote for "info on him [Winogradov]. Bill Shirer, Sigrid, Agnes (Knick's wife) and other have all replied."²⁸ From this work she produced a draft of a chapter on the first three months of her relationship with Winogradow, "Bright Journey Into

²⁷ "Germany Revisited," 1959, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

²⁸ Letter, 10/29/1971, Martha Dodd to Edgar Mowrer, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

Darkness." This piece, showing many signs of her earlier talent and passion, was all that she completed. Her attempt at a last piece on Mildred barely covered two pages.²⁹

At first she blamed the anticommunist west for her failure to write her magnum opus, but she came to a different realization after the fall of the Dubcek government. In the early 1970's, Martha wrote to Jurgen Kuczynski:

...I would be writing but I have had writer's bloc for years, really ever since I arrived in this part of the world, though I did numerous articles and essays etc., until I returned here from Cuba and even a few afterwards. I often think we made a big mistake to return here [i.e. to Prague]. To write about "over here" would take steady nerves and prose swollen with freedom, neither of which I possess.³⁰

But, at the same time, she was coming to realize that there were other reasons for her failures. To Jurgen Kuczynski she wrote of her hope to compose her memoirs. "Or shall I say anti-memoirs, ...and about 15 years under socialism! That's for posthumous publication."³¹ Martha had begun noting the impact that the lack of freedom in the Communist world had on her work.

Martha had always been a slow writer, but she was especially disappointed with both the quality and quantity of her work between 1953 and her death. She wrote few short stories during this period, but almost none after returning to Prague in 1968. She produced no new novels from the time she left the United States. In spite of trying to

²⁹ Both pieces are found in the Martha Dodd Papers at the Library of Congress. The piece on Mildred was discussed in some detail on p.51 and footnote 116 there.

³⁰ Letter, [ca. early 1970's], Martha Dodd to Juergen Kuczynski, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

³¹ Letter, 10/31/1967, Martha Dodd to Clarita Porret, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

write for almost two decades, writer's block ended her passion, her hope, her fiction writing.

By the mid-1970's she found herself defeated. To a friend in Cuba she wrote of her problems:

Carl Sandburg once, or rather many times, said to me, "martha, writing is an awe-ful profession. For it, one must insist on time, solitude, toil!" Where the hell [sic] is all that found? Maybe in a flying saucer. If I had someone who could ask me questions and I could answer them via tape or short hand, I could put it all together. Everyone nags me to do it. But I would need to have [by] my side a sensitive artistic American who had some political awareness, knew of the problems of the author's craft and was conscious of the hopes and despair of my generation. Where, oh where?" Maybe F.J.[Fred Jerome]?³²

A lack of freedom alone, of course, cannot explain her failure. Several noted writers produced works that breathed with "the swollen prose of freedom," as Martha described to one person, even under the most dire circumstances. Martha's failure had as much to do with the collapse of her vision, her "Kronstadt" as it did her imprisonment. Martha's early work flowed with the passion of indignation, aimed at the Nazis as well as her native land, and it swelled with the hope of a "progressive future." Khrushchev, though, had shown the fellow travelers and many of the communists of the world that Stalin was even bloodier than Hitler. The fate of Russia and Cuba showed Martha that "progress" did not lie in Communist socialism; her illusions regarding China were the last to fall (see Martha's comment above about socialism being tried there). Martha's (and Alfred's) utopia was a "will-o-the-wisp" that had stung her.

³² Letter, Undated, Martha to Lucy (copy to Fred Jerome, 10/1/1976), Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

In Sickness and In Sadness

Amidst the wreckage of "Prague Spring," the Sterns' lives in Czechoslovakia during the 1970's were as moribund as Martha's writing. They suffered recurrent illnesses, annoying and serious. Throughout the decade, Alfred battled cancerous lesions on his skin. Martha's digestion and general health were poor. In 1975, the Sterns were involved in a fatal car wreck as two medical students crashed into their car. The students died, the Sterns were hospitalized for months with broken bones and internal injuries. Neither fully recovered their health; Alfred lived another decade and Martha survived him by five years.

Other problems emerged as the Sterns realized they were cut off from the perquisites of being friends with those in power. Their 'talkativeness' during Prague Spring and the replacement of the communist leaders they had known personally by a younger group meant the Sterns were cut off from the life of importance and apparent influence that they had first enjoyed.

Largely alone in Prague, the Sterns began to reach out and reconnect with friends from their past. Martha renewed correspondence with George Roberts, Albert Maltz, Carleton Smith, a friend of Martha's from Chicago, Sigrid Schultz, and Bill Shirer. The Sterns had several close friends in England including Shirley DuBois, widow of W. E.B. DuBois, and her son. Other friends from Martha's years in Germany also became regular correspondents, including Elmina Rizo-Rangabe, a woman compromised by Martha in Through Embassy Eyes, and Max Delbruck, a Nobel Prize winning biologist and relative of the Harnack family. Attorneys Solovan Van Kaufman and Victor Rabinowitz represented the Sterns from time to time and maintained contact with them and even

visited them in Prague as did Jacques Mercier - a noted European jurist. This contact, though, was much more to Martha's benefit than Alfred's, as the correspondents were primarily old friends of hers, not his.

Their closest friend, actually, Martha's closest friend, was writer Dexter Masters, who was living in England at the time. Over the years, Martha and Masters corresponded frequently. Although the root of their friendship is not shown in the extant correspondence, it clearly predated Master's introduction of Jane Foster to the Sterns in 1942.³³ Over the 1970's and 1980's Martha and Masters reminisced about old friends and traded gossip, discussed literature and writing, talked of their current whereabouts and doings. Martha and Dexter compared notes on writing projects. Martha read a draft of Master's new novel and promised Masters that someday he would read another of hers. Masters wondered why the Sterns could not simply immigrate to England. Martha replied:

You may not know it, being a red-hot liberal, but England and its laws are much less enamored of our "record" than the Arabs. Some years ago a fellow who came from Israel to England and whose name you may have forgotten killed himself rather than be exported by the U.K. to the USA [i.e. Robert Soblen].³⁴

One old friend who became the subject of several letters between the Sterns and Masters was Jane Foster. At first the correspondence simply revealed that neither Masters nor Martha had seen Jane in years. Both had disliked her husband George and wondered what the two had been doing in France where they were last rumored to be. When it became clear that Jane was publishing a memoir

³³ As noted earlier, Masters introduced Jane Foster to the Sterns in 1942, hence the friendship is at least that old.

³⁴ Letter, 3/7/1972, Martha to Dexter Masters, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

in the late 1970's, the Sterns became worried. After obtaining a galley proof of the work, they threatened to sue Foster and her publisher, Sidgwick and Jackson, an English firm, for libel; both Jacques Mercier and Solovan von Kaufman advised them on the matter, eventually convincing them that there was little they could do. In the end, the book was published posthumously; Jane died in 1980, several months before publication. The Sterns were not pleased about what Foster had written about them, but took solace in her book's poor sales and inability to find a publisher outside of England.

Masters was responsible for another interesting connection as well. During the early 1980's he tried to introduce the Sterns to Alger Hiss. Masters had become a friend of Hiss' after his release from prison in 1954. In one letter, Masters told the Sterns how Hiss had recently visited him in England and that Masters had told Hiss about them. Martha wrote back, "Tell Alger we are with him and hope someday to meet him."³⁵ The Sterns were envious of Hiss's freedom, but did not begrudge him his success. Martha wrote:

How lucky he was to be indicted for perjury, so that time allowed the statute of limitation to exclude the other charge. We wish there would be such a thing as amnesty for us. I don't know what good it would do at our ages. We really feel too old to make drastic moves. But we might at least feel freer.³⁶ ...

³⁵ Letter, 8/15/1974, Martha Dodd to Dexter Masters, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

³⁶ Letter, 2/18/1976, Martha Dodd to Dexter Masters, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

Joking about Alger's freedom became a standard part in the Sterns' correspondence with Masters. Alfred wrote Masters that "according to the last *Newsweek* our mutual friend Alger is really "going to town" on his case."³⁷ Martha added:

Sorry, darling, we won't be able to meet you in the cities mentioned, not for a while yet, unless Alger gets our case quashed (it's the only way) with no strings attached. The "no strings attached" is what stops any reasonable resolution of the matter. Ask Alger! He will know what we mean. Our lawyers (Rabinowitz and Boudin) have tried to and we too (directly even to the top) with out success!³⁸

The Sterns do not appear to have met Hiss after all, but if they had, they shared much in common.

Vindication?

During the 1970's, the Sterns became increasingly infirm and lonely and the idea of returning home became very appealing. With the help of friends and lawyers, they began again to actively campaign to have the indictment against them quashed. These attempts had been made sporadically ever since their 1957 indictment and flight. Several times in the 1960's, Victor Rabinowitz and Leonard Boudin tried to end their fugitive status.³⁹ Justice, though, refused to consider the matter unless, as the FBI requested, the

³⁷ Letter, 2/21/1978, Alfred K. Stern to Dexter Masters, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

³⁸ Letter, 4/11/1978, Martha Dodd to Dexter Masters, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

³⁹ Rabinowitz periodically saw the Sterns in Cuba [Interview with Victor Rabinowitz, New York, New York, 7/1996]. He was a paid representative for Castro's regime during the 1960's and 1970's and a member of the Communist Party. Interview, John Fox with Victor Rabinowitz, New York City, 6/21/1997. See also Victor Rabinowitz, Unrepentant Leftist: A Lawyer's Memoir (Urbana, IL: Illinois University Press, 1996); No mention of the Sterns appears in this work.

Sterns submitted themselves to a thorough debriefing on their activities and intelligence connections.

Radical attorneys Victor Rabinowitz and Leonard Boudin had made the first attempt to have the charges against the Sterns dropped in 1966. At the time, Rabinowitz did legal work for the Cuban government in New York City and periodically traveled to Cuba as part of his duties. He had first met the Sterns when they worked on the Wallace campaign, but had lost touch with them during the 1950's and early 1960's. He remained their attorney and the principal voice for their petitions to the U.S. government through the 1970's. The Sterns' correspondence with Fred Jerome, a young activist in the Socialist Workers' Party when they first met in Cuba around 1965 suggests that in the early 1970's they did not feel that Rabinowitz's representation was effective. Still, Rabinowitz remained a friend and supporter through their deaths, even visiting them in Prague from time to time.⁴⁰

With the victory of President Jimmy Carter in 1976, the Sterns' friends and lawyers pushed even harder to have the charges against them dropped. Martha and Alfred even wrote directly to the President to beseech his help:⁴¹

⁴⁰ Interview with Mr. Victor Rabinowitz, New York City, 6/21/1997; Letter, Martha and Alfred Stern to Fred Jerome, 9/1/1977, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC; and Letter, Alfred Stern to Fred Jerome, 1/3/1978, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC. This early beginning is due to the fact that the Sterns regularly met Victor Rabinowitz in Cuba. Rabinowitz and his partner Boudin were radical New York attorneys who represented Castro's government in the United States in the 1960's. These early attempts to quash their indictments were not related to a crisis of faith on the part of the Sterns, but, it seems likely, a hope that the liberal Johnson Administration might be willing to drop the charges. Efforts were greatly reduced between 1968 and 1977, the Republican years.

⁴¹ No letter was found in the Jimmy Carter Library according to archivists there, but the Sterns' correspondence suggests one was sent and a draft copy of the letter is in the author's possession courtesy of Lilinka Sperlova, former secretary to the Sterns in Prague.

We do not deny that our anti-Nazi political fervor and our deep desire to prevent world wars, and later, to think about how to make socialism a feasible alternative in the USA and USSR, led us into extremist positions of an illusionist and idealistic nature, which were pro-Soviet in sympathy up to the point of bad judgement, bordering on extreme naivete!⁴²

The Sterns' *mea culpa* showed how far their Kronstadt had progressed, but it did not secure them a hearing with the Carter Justice Department

It was the action of Sylvia Crane, an old radical and friend of the Sterns, that did. After Mr. Carter's election, Crane approached Congressman Don Edwards of California to intercede on their behalf. According to Edwards, he had known Crane through his work as national chairman of Democratic Action. Edwards wrote:

She said Mr. Stern and his wife wanted to return to the United States because the case against them had always been based on lies by Boris Morros and others; further, all of the witnesses were long deceased. She suggested it was the decent thing for the Department of Justice to drop the indictment and let them come home.

Edwards wrote the Attorney General and suggested that he reexamine the case.⁴³

This was not a new subject. When talk first arose about quashing the indictment in the late 1960's the FBI strongly objected. The Bureau wanted to learn of the Sterns' knowledge in three areas: 1) The extent of Martha's espionage in Germany on behalf of Winogradow; 2) Martha and Alfred's activities from 1938 to 1942, especially regarding others whom Martha may have recruited to help the Soviets; and 3) the Sterns' Soviet contacts in Mexico while they resided there in the 1950's. The Bureau's interests clearly reveal that it thought it had a good understanding of the Sterns' activities with Morros and

⁴² Letter Draft, Undated, Alfred and Martha Stern to President Jimmy Carter courtesy of Lilinka Sperlova, former secretary to the Sterns in Prague.

⁴³ Letter, Don Edwards to Author, undated [1995]; FBIMemo, 3/22/1979, 100-57453-2497X.

the events between the end of the BMMC and their flight to Mexico. The FBI insisted that any agreement to drop the indictment should include an in-depth interview as a precondition for the Sterns' return to the U.S.

Within the Justice Department, the case was reconsidered. DOJ determined that even if the Sterns returned they could not be tried successfully as all the major witnesses against them had died: Morros died in 1963, Jack Soble in 1967. Although Myra Soble was still alive, her knowledge of the Sterns' activities would have been largely hearsay and not directly applicable to the charges against the Sterns. Unsympathetic to the fugitives' plight, the FBI held out the hope the Sterns would submit to an interview as a precondition for their return.

As matters dragged on, Edwards wrote Anne Wexler, Assistant to the President about the case suggesting that the original case was based on "very questionable testimony" and that Justice was being "rather rigid" in considering the Sterns' plea. Wexler wrote Assistant Attorney General Michael Egan for a reply. Still, debate between Justice and the FBI, continued through the summer and fall of 1978. It was only in January 1979 that the Bureau was told to stop pressing its objections by Assistant Attorney General Phillip Heyman. The Court quashed the indictment on March 22 1979 at the request of the Department of Justice.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ The Edwards/Wexler correspondence is in the White House Central Files, Subject Files, Box JL-9, Folder "JL 3 8/1/1978-9/1/1978," James Earl Carter Presidential Library. The details re the rest of the debate come from "Free The Spies; Punish the FBI," AIM Reports, 12/1/1980, and the Stern File. According to Weinstein and Vassiliev, [The Haunted Wood, p.71] the Soviets did not object to the Sterns returning to the United States as "data that the Sterns have about the activities of Soviet Intelligence are obsolete and mainly known to the adversary from the traitor John's [Boris Morros's] testimonies."

There is no evidence that the Bureau was vindictive in insisting that the Sterns be debriefed. Furthermore, it was possible that the Sterns could have provided information allowing the Bureau to identify unknown agents (after all, the Mitrokhin Archive allowed the identification of two Soviet agents in Britain contemporary to Martha. The Sterns' welcome and apparent status in the east from 1957 to 1967 also suggested to the Bureau that Martha and Alfred might have information of current operational value as well. Overall, though, these prospects were unlikely and it appears this was part of the reason why the Bureau stepped aside and let Justice end the matter.

In the aftermath of dropping the charges against the Sterns, Congressman Edwards took some heat for his effort. Someone in the Justice Department leaked Edwards' role in the matter and a political opponent "accused [Edwards] in his campaign of being connected to that well-known subversive Stern, and having tried to help him." Edwards was also reported to have taken a campaign contribution from the Sterns. About this, he remarked "I guess I did although I can't recall any details of that."⁴⁵ Alfred did send a contribution but regretted the trouble he caused his advocate. When Edwards ran for reelection two years later, Alfred made another donation to Edwards, but took another route in doing so to avoid embarrassing his benefactor again. Stern wrote his friend Corliss Lamont, a philosophy professor at Columbia University and long time fellow traveler and asked him to help. Stern sent Lamont \$500 and Lamont proceeded to make the donation to Edwards in his name.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Letter, Undated [1995], Don Edwards to Author.

⁴⁶ This had become a federal crime in the wake of the Watergate scandal.

For the Sterns, having the charges dropped was an empty victory. Ill health, fear of a changed America, inflation, and, most importantly, an inability to come to terms with potential IRS penalties meant that the Sterns would never return home. And, even though they could now visit friends in England and Western Europe, Martha and Alfred realized that life in Western Europe was too expensive and it would be impractical to move to either England or Switzerland. They were forced to content themselves with short visits to the West while continuing to live in Prague.

For the Sterns, the time in Prague between their visits to Western Europe was lonely. They had never learned the language, did not fit in well in Prague, and were forgotten by those in power and their few surviving friends. On June 23, 1986, when Alfred died of stomach cancer, Martha lost her companion of nearly fifty years. She died four years later, August 10, 1990. The regimes in which she had seen the hope of the future had begun to collapse under the weight of their social and economic failures. The Soviet Empire and its Iron Curtain began to fall eleven months before Martha died. Had Martha lived longer, she could have talked again, this time with real freedom, not the illusory one of the "progressive" revolutions she chased. Had she lived longer, Martha might have found the strength to write her ultimate memoir; death came too soon.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Martha died August 10, 1990.

Conclusion

This dissertation has looked closely at the development and implications of the radical faith embraced by Martha Dodd Stern and her family. The metaphor of a pilgrimage has been used to suggest, with Richard Crossman¹ and Raymond Aron² the similarities between a religious faith and the secular commitment of the fellow traveler. By building on the insights of David Caute,³ Crossman, and Aron, a unique picture of this faith has emerged and a typology of the fellow traveler was developed.

Several features of the typology of the fellow traveler are drawn from David Caute's book, The Fellow Travellers: A Postscript to the Enlightenment. Caute has described the fellow travelers as rationalists. These rationalists sought to apply a scientific approach to the problems of the future. Their rationalism, though, was derivative of a Rousseauian romanticism. This emerged through the traveler's vision of "socialism in one country." The primitivism of the Russian people (and for Martha, the German's), thrilled them. They welcomed the social engineering of the peasant class in the USSR that was applied to elevate the peasant from their primitive state to the fulfillment of human potential.

¹ Richard Crossman, ed., The God That Failed, (New York: Crown, 1993).

² Raymond Aron, "Alexander Solzhenitsyn and European Leftism," in Daniel Mahoney, ed., In Defense of Political Reason: Essays by Raymond Aron (Latham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1994).

³ David Caute, The Fellow Travellers: A Postscript to the Enlightenment, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973).

Caute's typology, though, was found to be incomplete and so further insight was drawn from Richard Crossman and Raymond Aron. In the introduction to The God That Failed, Crossman noted that the communist intellectuals had lost their faith in western democracy.⁴ This was true in Martha, though, her loss of faith was incomplete. She clung to the rights of freedom of speech, press, and association that her father championed in Hitler's Germany. Ironically, Martha thought these rights were not readily found in the United States, but lauded the Soviets for their work in instituting them in the USSR.

A second continuity between Crossman's communist intellectuals and fellow travelers is also important. Both groups of intellectuals saw themselves as "premature anti-fascists." This anti-fascism bonded these distinct, yet intimately related groups of the left together in a noble cause. When the western publics did not immediately embrace the left's disdain for Hitler, the fellow travelers fell out-of- step with the apparently apathetic American public and found solace in the Popular Front of the communists. That Martha found this apathy and distance in the American public is clear in her Through Embassy Eyes and her other major works, especially Sowing the Wind.

An interesting and significant difference, though, existed between Crossman's communists and the fellow travelers. Many Communists, including those who wrote for Crossman, were willing to sacrifice "bourgeoise liberties" even in the United States, to defeat fascism. As Martha's life suggests that the fellow traveler did not press for a similar revolutionary approach in the United States. She was unwilling to suffer the loss

⁴ Martha's life and commitments showed that the border between communist and fellow traveler could be quite thin and constantly shifting. Since Crossman's communists are so similar to Caute's fellow travelers, and Martha mirrors aspects of both, the typology developed here combines elements applied to both groups.

of the rights they held as American citizens and loudly claimed those rights when she thought they were being threatened.

Each of these features identified the fellow travelers and showed their relationship to communism, but the most important contribution in Crossman's book is Louis Fischer's analogy between religious faith and the communist's secular faith. He suggests that this faith was characterized by a combination of reason and will. To further understand this claim, the work of French philosopher Raymond Aron was incorporated. Aron suggested that "a Protestant moralism swung round into rejection of the social order" characterized the fellow traveler.⁵ This dissertation has further described this faith by showing the clear, filial relationship between the faith of fellow traveler and that of the social gospel Progressives.⁶ Because of these filial ties, the fellow traveler's faith manifested itself in a strong emotional attachment to democratic rights and the fulfillment of human progress as promised by the Soviet escahton. This is the most important feature of the typology of the fellow traveler developed here.

Clearly a radicalized Progressivism characterized Martha's faith. She rejected the substance of her father's Wilsonian progressivism, but held a sentimental, romantic attachment her father's Progressive faith.⁷ She longed for democracy and the realization

⁵ Aron, "Alexander Solzhenitsyn and European Leftism," in Mahoney, ed., In Defense of Political Rationalism, p.121.

⁶ The fellow travelers relationship to the Progressives is analogous to the relationship between the "red diaper babies"/New Left and the Old Left.

⁷ Dodd was not an adherent to a social gospel, not being an atheist, but skeptical of and distant from organized religion. Perhaps most telling, is Martha's comment in Through Embassy Eyes about her father trying to teach her the "literary beauties" of the Bible [p.4].

of the "Kingdom of God" as strongly as did many of the earlier Progressive Era.⁸ This faith defined the horizon that encompassed Martha's world and those of other fellow travelers.

While tracing the development this faith through Martha's pilgrimage, an important sub-theme has entwined itself with the main theme of this work. This sub-theme concerns the relationship between fellow travelers, those like them, and Soviet intelligence. It encompasses the conflicts that arose within the United States over the nature and existence of these relationships and so touches on the subjects of "McCarthyism," "red scares," in general, the treatment of those of far left by the United States government.

Through Martha's life, this dissertation has shown that the faith of the fellow traveler led some of its adherents not only to support the program of the USSR overtly, but also covertly, as active agents of the Soviet Union. Martha's covert work, therefore, was examined in the context of the social network that emerged around her. Her role as a Soviet agent suggests a significant reason why it appeared to American anticommunists that great conspiratorial webs linked the far-left of the United States to Soviet intelligence.

It was shown that while conspiracies like Zubilin's spy rings existed, widespread conspiratorial webs did not. A combination of ignorance, obtuseness - both willing and unknowing, and chance meant that the number of persons supporting Soviet intelligence

⁸ This is not to say that the American fellow travelers were necessarily unique in developing from Progressive roots. James Kloppenberg's Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920, shows that the Progressive Movement was not unique to America and so one should expect to find that European fellow travelers shared similar origins.

was much greater than the number of persons actively working as Soviet agents. This, in turn, suggests that widespread FBI investigations of leftists could be shown to be based on reasonable, probable cause, even as most of these investigations failed to reveal that fellow travelers were legally culpable in supporting Soviet intelligence.

Martha, of course, was legally culpable because she actively supported Soviet espionage, potentially violating several anti-espionage statutes and foreign agent registration statutes. Her role as a Soviet agent, though, was limited and the weight of her guilt lessened because she was an inconsequential agent. Her experience with the FBI is important, not because it reveals the workings of an important spy, but because it shows how the links of one person to Soviet intelligence potentially implicated others in what appeared to be a conspiratorial web of subversion. At the center of the so-called "red webs" were people who actively aided Soviet intelligence, casting suspicion on many with whom they worked. That the FBI took an interest in their activity, at least initially, was reasonable.

The life of Martha Dodd Stern (and her family) clearly illustrates the arguments delineated above. Martha grew up on the Progressive faith of her father, William E. Dodd. Under the influence of Robert Morss Lovett and Carl Sandburg, Martha came to see the Great Depression as a failure of western liberal democracy, and moved to the left of her father. Nazi Germany completed and tempered her ideological development, as she came under the influence of her lover, Soviet diplomat Boris Winogradow, and her friend, Mildred Harnack. She responded to the threat of fascism and the promise of communism by committing herself to work for the Soviet Union and against fascism, not

only the fascism horrifically evident in Nazi Germany, but also in the specter of an emergent fascism she identified in the United States.

Work on these commitments began while she lived in Germany. There, Martha passed information from the U.S. embassy to her Soviet handlers. When she returned to the United States in 1937, she maintained her contact with Soviet intelligence, remaining in episodic contact with Soviet intelligence, through the purges of the late 1930's and even the Nazi Soviet Pact (1939-1941). She was puzzled by these things, but her faith remained unshaken. Little is known to have come of these efforts and what evidence does exist suggests that the results of Martha's intelligence activities were probably meager.

Instead, Martha devoted most of herself to writing and public activism. She composed several interesting and important anti-fascist/pro-Soviet works. The first was the best selling, autobiographical, Through Embassy Eyes. It was shown how Martha developed her signature themes in this compelling mixture of innocence and worldliness. These were three: fascism's degradation of the human spirit, especially the artist's; the nascent fascism growing in the United States; and the prescription to cure this outbreak of fascism - look to the Soviet Union as the icon of human progress. It was also shown how these themes recurred in all of Martha's major works, including, Ambassador Dodd's Diary, a work that was shown to be something other than a compilation of William Dodd's diary entries.

From these first writings, we turned to the public anti-fascist work of Martha and her family. While Martha was writing, Alfred and Bill ran unsuccessfully for public office. Each, though, remained publicly active and supported numerous political causes

and all three worked together on supporting U.S. Week and other radical journals like In fact. To show their support for various anti-fascist or pro-Soviet causes, the three sponsored and/or attended numerous meetings and fund-raisers. They signed many related public letters and appeals. The FBI and House Committee on Un-American Activities filled many pages listing all of these actions because of their fear that the persons listed were involved in a conspiracy with the Soviet Union against America.

The Sterns' lives suggest that the answer to the question of whether there was such a conspiracy is complicated. In social circles, Martha and Alfred were even more influential. Their "radical chic" parties brought together influential, leftist artists, writers, and politicians. Their guest lists included Vito Marcantonio, Paul Robeson, Lillian Hellman, Jacob Javits, Isamu Noguchi, the Hollywood Ten (before they became so named), and numerous others, a large portion of "Who's Who" of the influential left of the day.

These soirees and other public events, in and of themselves, would be interesting and useful to understand the many connections among the intellectual left of the late 1930s and early 1940s, but it is also suggested here that Martha's work had a deeper meaning. Martha's public activism and social calendar was intertwined with her clandestine intelligence work. It was shown that these soirees and other activities allowed Martha to continue contributing to Soviet intelligence. Martha provided information about the important people she met and talked to, on occasion she would suggest candidates for possible recruitment by the Soviets. Even so, her only known recruits were her husband, her brother, and a communist friend, Jane Foster, hardly a

roster of successful agents. Nor would the political information she provided be of much use to the Soviets as they tended to favor scientific and military information.

The significance of Martha's intelligence connections, therefore, are not in her success as an agent, but in the social network that grew up around her and the impact it and similar ones had on American political culture. Martha's connections meant that she became a link between Soviet intelligence and the wider political and cultural left of the New Deal.⁹ Social networks like those of the Sterns fed the suspicions of the FBI and eventually led to FBI investigations of hundreds of persons. In watching Martha and Alfred, the FBI sought to learn what they Sterns did for Soviet intelligence and with whom they did it. It is only logical that they would work with those of similar political interests and commitments, hence the FBI took an interest in these persons too. Most of them appeared to have little to do with Soviet intelligence on a conscious level and so the Bureau's investigation would be ended.

Soon Martha's activities and those of Alfred and Bill, public and clandestine, came to the attention of the United States government. In 1941, months before U.S. entry into World War II, the FBI initiated domestic security investigations of Alfred Stern and Bill Dodd. For Bill, a government employee, his role in a large number of communist front groups was sufficient to call his loyalty into question; ironically, his intelligence

⁹ I do not imply that the importance of Martha's social web was that it constituted a grand conspiracy of the radical left and New Deal to aid and abet the Soviet Union; it most certainly was not. The connections, at times, appeared to imply such a creature, but the conspiracies that did exist on the American side, like the Silvermaster and Perlo groups, were small by nature. It is true that the Soviet espionage apparatus was conspiratorial and centrally organized, albeit this too had its separate components, like the NKVD, the GRU, etc. My argument is that people like Martha linked these conspirators to a large number of unwitting persons who were at least, in part, sympathetic to the overall goals of the USSR and so were usually unwitting aids and allies.

connections were unknown to both Congress and the FBI. One result was that Bill lost his public job.

For Alfred, a private citizen, the FBI's interest had little effect on his life even as his relationship to several suspected Soviet agents was noted. The Bureau linked Alfred to two major war-time counterintelligence investigations against the USSR, ALTO and COMRAP. In the course of its brief and sporadic investigation of Alfred, the Bureau noted some of Martha's public activities, but knew nothing of her relationship to Soviet intelligence. During World War II, Soviet intelligence was of little concern compared to the threat of German espionage, sabotage and subversion. In 1946, the Stern file was closed. Clearly, the Bureau had probable cause to initiate a preliminary investigation on Alfred. It even had probable cause to launch a more extensive investigation, that it did not was related to the more immediate threat of Axis operations during the war.

With the end of the war and the growth of U.S./Soviet animosity, the FBI began to focus on the Soviet threat detailed in the separated but interrelated testimony of Igor Guzenko, Elizabeth Bentley, and Whittaker Chambers. The apparent cooperation of the US and USSR in 1943 had given way to the Cold War. Looking for overlooked signs of Soviet intelligence activity by checking over old case files for uncovered leads, Los Angeles Division agents asked colorful Hollywood producer, Boris Morros, to come in for an interview. FBI agents had seen Alfred in the company of Morros and another Soviet agent in 1943. In July 1947, Morros explained to the LA agents the significance of that sighting. He implicated the Sterns in a plot to provide cover for Soviet espionage agents throughout the Western Hemisphere. Sufficient information existed to corroborate

Morros's allegations. The FBI developed more corroborating information in time even as Morros himself remained a problematic witness.

That July the Bureau launched a major counterintelligence investigation based on the reasonable suspicion that the Sterns were Soviet agents. Wiretaps, mail-covers, physical surveillance, microphone surveillance, informants, and other investigative techniques were devoted to ferreting out any current intelligence activities in which the Sterns were engaged. Ironically, the NKVD had already begun to lose interest in using Martha and Alfred as agents. Because of this, the only current evidence of espionage that the FBI uncovered, was their repeated efforts to reconnect with Jack Soble to revive their stalled status as agents. In the hope of catching the Sterns and their contacts, the Bureau initiated a long term, intensive surveillance of the Sterns lives.

The FBI paid particular attention to Martha and Alfred's political activities, looking for signs of Soviet directed subversion. The Bureau came close to finding some in the Sterns' close connection to former Vice President Henry A. Wallace. Martha and Alfred were neighbors, friends, supporters, and advisors to Wallace during the period when he debated whether to run for President and whether he should run on a third-party ticket. Since the FBI knew the Sterns had worked with Soviet intelligence and continued to contact known Soviet agents, their relationship with Wallace elicited great concern in the Bureau as the amount of attention given to the relationship indicates.

The FBI, it was argued, legitimately investigated this matter, and appears to have found no active intelligence activity in the Sterns' relationship with Wallace. Through their friendship with the Wallaces, the Sterns acted like agents of influence, except they were not. It was shown that they did not seek to influence Wallace at the behest of the

NKVD, i.e. as Soviet agents, rather they sought to influence him on their own.¹⁰ They directed Wallace to work with the communist-dominated third party and disingenuously assuaged his concerns that the groups supporting him were communist dominated. They only suggestion of an intelligence connection was their work with Ignace Zlotowski, a Polish Communist, to influence Wallace's discussion of biological warfare. They also enabled other communist and radical figures to obtain a hearing with the candidate. Both of these actions, though, appear to have been initiated by the Sterns on their own, rather than as Soviet agents. Perhaps most indicative of this point was when Martha ignored the advice of Soviet diplomat Valentin Sorokin to tell Wallace that she would not write speeches for him.

Clearly, the FBI realized that its intensive investigation was revealing little current intelligence activity. In spite of the apparent dry well, the Bureau maintained a scaled back but still significant interest in the Sterns' for several more years. By 1953, the Sterns' past activities threatened to become public spectacle. That spring - only months before the June execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg - the Sterns appeared to have become aware of the FBI's interest in them. Others, it became clear, were interested in them too. In early July, a New York political gossip column announced a rumor that Senator McCarthy's Special Committee was going to call Martha to testify before Congress. The events of May had been even more disturbing to Martha and Alfred. Sandra Sheffield, the birth mother of their adopted son, Bobby, sued to have the adoption rescinded.

¹⁰ Since Martha and Alfred associated with Wallace on their own initiative and were not directed by Soviet intelligence, they were technically not agents-of-influence.

Fearing the loss of Bobby, the notoriety that would accompany an appearance before McCarthy's committee, and, perhaps, dreading that they might share the fate of the Rosenbergs who were executed only days before they left for Mexico, the Sterns fled to Mexico on July 4, 1953. They set up residence there and began living in Mexico City and Cuernavaca as they had in New York City and Lewisboro. They continued to entertain numerous left-wing artists and writers. Martha continued to write, albeit with declining success. Alfred continued to advocate large-scale public housing issues and explore various investment opportunities. There is no evidence that they were involved in espionage at the time and their fear of Robert's birth mother and McCarthy was not strong enough to prevent their periodic visits to the United States. The conversations overheard by the FBI through its technical surveillance during the Sterns' periodic visits to California and New York suggest that Martha and Alfred did not fear the government either.

It was during this period that the FBI debated turning the case over to the Department of Justice for prosecution and the distinction between a counterintelligence investigation and a criminal investigation become apparent. The prosecution of the Sterns first arose in 1948, but the Bureau quickly decided that there was not enough evidence to sustain a prosecution of the Sterns. Furthermore, the FBI clearly did not want to risk exposing Morros, at that time a promising double agent. By 1951, that had changed and a more in depth examination of the potential evidence commenced. Because Morros remained an active double agent and many of the other subjects of MOCASE were in Europe, the FBI delayed passing the matter to Justice for review several times between 1953 and 1956.

In July 1956, the FBI finally presented MOCASE to the Department of Justice. The prosecutors decided to pursue the Sterns' earlier intelligence connections. Morros was recalled from Europe that fall and Justice considered his value as a witness. In January 1957, a grand jury was convened to hear the matter, indictments were returned, and FBI Agents arrested the Sobles and Jacob Albam on charges of espionage and conspiracy to commit espionage.

At first, the government simply tried to get the Sterns to testify to the grand jury, probably expecting that Martha and Alfred would perjure themselves and thus greatly strengthen the case against them. When this failed, indictments were drawn up charging Martha and Alfred with conspiracy to commit espionage and espionage. The Department of Justice had worked for months to extradite the Sterns from Mexico and kept the indictments sealed hoping, still, to do so, but somehow, the Sterns learned they had been indicted. They immediately fled Mexico for the East Bloc using fake passports to fly out in the middle of the night on July 20, 1957.

For the next several years, Martha and Alfred were thrilled with their new life, "chasing young revolutions" and socializing with the powerful and famous in the communist nations they visited. Bobby did not thrive, but Martha and Alfred reveled in the welcome they received from old and new friends, intellectuals, artists, and politicians. The rise of third-world revolutionary communist movements in Cuba, China, and Vietnam thrilled them as much as these revolutions thrilled radical student groups in the United States and Western Europe in the 1960s.

By 1957, Martha and Alfred began to find their experience of the socialist world to be a severe disappointment. No revolution measured up to their utopian vision, as the

"will-o-the-wisps" they chased turned into "wasps," according to Martha. In 1968, they returned to Prague from Cuba where they had been for several years, just in time to watch the Soviet tanks crush the Prague Spring revolt. Th Soviet invasion proved to be their personal Kronstadt. Their faith failed them.

The Sterns turned their attention inward and began reflecting on their lives and commitments. Illness, both serious and annoying, their lack of freedom and their loneliness in Prague frequently hampered their self-evaluation. Beginning as early as 1966, they sought to have the charges against them dropped. The FBI fought these attempts to have the charges dropped and the Bureau demanded the opportunity to debrief the Sterns about their connections to Soviet intelligence. The Bureau was especially interested in Martha's German years, the Sterns' activities in the early 1940's, and their activities in Mexico.¹¹ In 1978, the Justice Department decided to close the matter and asked the courts to drop the charges. By this time, Martha and Alfred were too frail to face a return to a much-changed America. Even more problematic was what they said was a huge tax bill that they would owe the IRS; the Martha Dodd Papers contain no evidence about the extent of this potential liability and the IRS denied my FOIA request on the Sterns. They were trapped in Prague and it was there that Alfred died in 1986, and Martha four years later. Although they still hoped for a socialist future after their Kronstadt, they recognized that the icons in which they had placed their faith were fatally flawed.

¹¹ Based on the evidence currently available, their information would not appear to be very valuable, but if Martha's ability to recruit was more successful than it appears to have been, the FBI could have learned quite a bit. Given Weinstein and Vassiliev's evidence, discussed throughout, this appears unlikely in hindsight [The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America (New York: Random House, 1999)].

The lives of Martha Dodd Stern and her family provide a microcosm in which to examine the influences that lead so many intellectuals, artists, and men and women of letters in the 1930's to despair of the United States and the Western project in general. The example of Martha and her family illustrates the emergence of their faith in Soviet Union as an icon of the "Kingdom of God." This faith emerged from their progressive roots as they witnessed the trials of the Great Depression, experienced Nazi Germany, and loathed the appeasement and vacillation of the western powers in the face of the Nazi threat. For some, like Martha and her family, this faith commitment led them to work with Soviet intelligence. Of course, most of those who took paths similar to theirs did not make such a commitment. Their connections to Soviet intelligence efforts came through the intricate social/political networks that linked persons like Martha to the many actors and diverse groups on the radical left. Together these characteristics were each part of the typology of the fellow traveler developed in order to understand Martha and her relationship to the larger pro-Soviet/anti-fascist movement.

By tracing the "progressive" pilgrimage of Martha and her family through their encounters with the American government and their flight to the Communist world, this dissertation has shown how Martha finally reached her Kronstadt. This returns us to the personal tragedy with which this story ends. It is on the personal level that Martha's experiences, and those of her family, resonate from this late vantage.

In 1938, Martha's father cautioned her: "I can't help thinking your happiness depends on your literary accomplishments."¹² Robert Morss Lovett remembered that "[Martha] had a subtle gift for stories that seemed to [him] as rare as Kay Boyle's [a

¹² Letter, William E. Dodd to Martha Dodd, 6/11/1938, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

noted writer of short stories in the early 1930s].¹³" Martha later reminisced that Albert Maltz, told her that she " could be one of the best if [she]'d really give it all [she] had, be a "pro", not an "occasional" writer."¹⁴ Without a doubt, her books and early stories and the acclaim they earned confirm this assessment.

Tragically, Martha's talent was crushed as surely as the brief flourishing of dissent during the "Hundred Flowers" period in China or the "Prague Spring" in Czechoslovakia. She and her family had rejected a flawed but real freedom of America and so had to flee in fear of prosecution for actions following from their rejection. In the end, her horizon did not match reality, her faith crumbled. Where Louis Fischer had held out the hope that one could find redemption through a creative act of will aimed at rededicating oneself to democracy and freedom, Martha found herself unable to do so. She had dreamed of the perfect vehicle by which to do so - a fictionalized, but comprehensive memoir of her years in Germany and her faith in communism as it emerged through her love for Boris Winogradow and Mildred Harnack. These were the two most significant persons she met in Germany and two persons about whom she was silent in Through Embassy Eyes. Martha, though could not recreate these loves through her writing, she was trapped in a world created under her old horizon, the one she had adopted in Nazi Germany and held fast to until her Kronstadt in 1968. She could not escape it due to her physical frailty, problems that faced her should she return to the United States, and, most importantly, an inability to express her criticisms of the East Bloc for fear of persecution. Martha's

¹³ Robert Morss Lovett, All Our Years: The Autobiography of Robert Morse Lovett (Viking Press: New York, 1948), pp.205-6.

¹⁴ Letter, Martha Dodd to Albert Maltz, 5/2/1972, Martha Dodd Papers, LOC.

pilgrimage took her in search of a heaven on earth. What she found on her spiritual journey stifled her hope and extinguished her passion.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Brief Chronology of Martha Dodd Stern and her Family

1890	Alfred Kaufman Stern born in Fargo, North Dakota.
1905	William E. Dodd, Jr. born in Ashland, VA.
1908	Martha Eccles Dodd Born in Ashland, VA.
1921	Alfred Stern marries Marion Rosenwald, daughter of Julius Rosenwald.
1920's	Alfred works first for Sears Roebuck then as Director of the Julius Rosenwald.
Lt. 1920's	William Dodd accepts appointment at University of Chicago. Martha attends here for a time.
1931	Martha works as assistant literary editor for Chicago Tribune.
1932	Martha marries New York banker George Basset Roberts
1933	FDR appoints William Dodd to be Ambassador to Germany. Family goes with them, including Martha.
1934	Roberts divorces Martha for desertion. Martha dates Winogradow and travels on a "Potemkin" tour of Russia.
1935	Martha escorts Thomas Wolfe around Germany.
1936	Alfred and Marion divorce. Martha dates Soviet Embassy official, Boris Vinogradov [He is purged in 1938]. Martha's brother, William, works for World Peace Campaign.
1937	Martha returns to NY. Alfred moves to NY.
1938	Martha and Alfred married.
1939	<u>Through Embassy Eyes</u> , Martha's memoir of her German years published.
1940	William Edward Dodd dies at home in Ashland, VA.
1941	Martha and her brother, William Dodd Jr., publish their father's "diary." FBI begins domestic security investigation of Alfred Stern.
1942	FBI opens a Hatch Act investigation of Bill Dodd. Martha in Hollywood on contract to do screenplay based on her German book and her father's diary.
1943	Alfred Stern invests in music production company owned by producer Boris Morros.
1944	Disputes over business practices and personalities cause Stern and Morros to dissolve the company.

- 1945 Martha's first novel, Sowing the Wind, is published. Sterns adopt Bobby.
- 1947 Morris turns himself into the FBI. Large scale investigation of the Sterns begins.
- 1948 Sterns play role in funding and working for Wallace's campaign for the presidency.
- 1953 Sterns immigrate to Mexico
- 1957 Sterns indicted by grand jury on several counts of espionage and related violations. They flee to Prague.
- 1960's Sterns spend several years in Cuba, two long stays in China.
- 1968 Sterns return to Prague to live. They suffer their "Kronstadt" the following year.
- 1970's The Sterns' health deteriorates and they seek to have the indictment quashed. Because of health and IRS problems the Sterns remain in Prague.
- 1978 Sterns' indictment quashed. They get US passports again.
- 1986 Alfred Stern dies in Prague.
- 1990 Martha Stern dies in Prague.

Appendix 2

Biographical Sketches of the Principal Subjects of MOCASE

Boris Michael Morros

Boris Mikhailovich Morros was born in St. Petersburg, Russia on January 1, 1891. Persons who knew him agreed that he was a talented musician and raconteur, the latter, they thought, would suggest that such tales about his life should be taken advisedly, if at all.¹ He immigrated to the United States in 1922 and became a United States citizen in March 1942.²

Morros worked for Paramount Studios in the 1920's and in the early thirties was transferred to Hollywood. While in Hollywood Morros met the NKVD. According to Morros, this contact began when he tried to send care packages of food, clothing, and other goods to his family in Russia. His effort, and obvious link to persons in Russia, brought him to the attention of Soviet officials in New York who took an interest in him. Morros began a long-term relationship with Soviet intelligence, providing cover for

¹ The author spoke to and/or corresponded with several people who knew Morros between the 1940's and 1960's.

² Information for these paragraphs on Morros come from Morros's autobiography written with Charles Samuels, My Ten Years as a Counterspy (New York: Viking, 1959), a work as problematic as Through Embassy Eyes and An Un-American Lady [see below] and from Morros's sworn, detailed statements to the FBI made on 11/27/1956, 11/27/56, and 12/6/1956 found in FBI file 100-202315-2403. Allen Weinstein's and Alexei Vassiliev's The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America (New York: Random House, 1999) has a valuable chapter on Morros as well and presents something of the Soviet opinion of Morros and his work. Not surprisingly evaluation of the damage Morros did, or didn't do, acting as a double agent was released to Weinstein.

"Edward Herbert," an illegal named Vassili Mikhailovich Zubilin.³ Their relationship continued through 1938 and Zubilin, apparently, remembered Morros's efforts favorably.

In 1939, Morros resigned from Paramount to produce movies of his own. It was at this time, Morros said, that he incorporated Boris Morros Music Productions in New York City.⁴ He produced a number of bad movies including *The Flying Dunces*, a satire of the French Foreign Legion starring Laurel and Hardy, and *Second Chorus* with Fred Astaire and Paulette Goddard, a second rate musical.

Around 1942, Zubilin, then *r  sident* of the NKVD's New York station, renewed contact with Morros. Morros agreed to provide cover for two Swiss illegals and Zubilin, in return, arranged for Morros' father to get an exit visa to the United States; Boris's mother had died several years before. The carrot, though, was followed with the stick. Zubilin told Morros that he was to employ one to three Soviet agents within 90 days or reprisals would be made against his family in the USSR.⁵

Morros stalled on this demand, but agreed to Zubilin's next proposal, allowing Alfred Stern to invest in his music company. The operation came to be known as CHORD to the Soviets and Zubilin put great stock in it at first. As seen earlier, it failed and Morros repaid Stern the bulk of his investment. In 1947, Morros agreed to cooperate with the FBI and became a double-agent. During the time Morros worked with the Bureau, Soble came to see him as a friend. The two socialized together and later, Jack

³ Weinstein and Vassiliev, Haunted Wood, p.111.

⁴ The papers of incorporation that the FBI found during their investigation of Morros place the actual date at 1/12/43. Abe Frankl and Samuel Rheiner were listed as corporate officers as well as Morros.

⁵ Morros, My Ten Years as a Counterspy, pp.37-8. Two of Morros's brothers had already been executed in the earlier purges, 100-202315.

dreamed of engaging in a joint business venture with Morros that, apparently, had no intelligence function. Morros spent much time in Europe pursuing films to bring to the United States and other projects while he maintained contact with Soble and Soviet intelligence. In late 1956, he returned to the United States to confer with Justice Department attorneys preparing the case against the MOCASE subjects. Soble did not suspect that Morros had come to be a double agent until he was arrested in January 1957.

In the wake of his public exposure through the arrests, trials, and related events involving the MOCASE subjects, Morros attained some public notoriety. He testified before the House of Representatives and the Senate in August 1957. While testifying to Congress dribbled out his story a bit each day closing with a cliffhanger that promised another revelation the next. His public fame led to an appearance on *Face the Nation* within weeks of his congressional appearances and a serialized version of his story in *Look Magazine*. Two years later, with the aid of a ghost writer, he produced a memoir of his experience, My Ten Years as a Counterspy. In 1961, the book was made into a "B" movie, "Man on a String," starring Ernest Borgnine. Morros reveled in the notoriety, but quickly faded from public interest even as trials arising from the MOCASE investigation continued into the 1960's. Boris Morros died of cancer in 1965.

Jack and Myra Soble

Jack Soble was the youngest of six children born to Samuel and Liba Sobolevicius, Lithuanians of Jewish ancestry. He grew up in the Lithuanian town of Vilkaviskis. His father, Samuel, was a businessman who ran a bristle concern supplying raw materials for brushes. Jack attended Hebrew school in his hometown of Vilkaviskis and then attended Russian high school in several different places with his brother, Robert.

Much to his father's displeasure, Jack followed Robert into Communist Party affairs. When Robert was arrested for his communist activity, Samuel Sobolevicius sent his sons to Germany. As long as they did not play too active a role in communist affairs, Samuel supported his sons' education. Jack took language and business courses at the Handel-Hochschule in Leipzig. Jack studied for a doctoral degree in economics. Samuel finally cut off Jack's funding when his son went to Moscow in 1933.

Soble had first visited Moscow in 1927 for the Tenth Communist Congress. He reported on the events for a German Communist Party newspaper under the code-name SENIN. While in Moscow, he was approached by members of the Trotsky faction. Soble himself had belonged to a Trotskyite faction in Germany and agreed to bring a copy of the movement's platform back to Germany so that Trotsky's thought could be spread in Europe. The violent split between Stalin and Trotsky occurred soon after Jack returned to Germany.

While Soble visited the Tenth Congress, he also met and married Myra Perske. Myra was born in Russia and raised by her grandparents after her parents divorced and her mother remarried. During the 1920's when Jack lived in Germany, Myra worked as a pianist in a night club orchestra. She next worked for the Soviet Department of

Education and then as a clerk with the "tea industry." To keep this last job Myra enrolled in the *Komsomol* or young communist organization. It was through *Komsomol* that she met Jack in October 1927; they were married six weeks later.

Throughout much of their marriage Jack and Myra traveled in different directions, coming together for extended periods of time and then separating for long periods as their work responsibilities drew them elsewhere. Jack played a role in the Trotsky organization for several years. One of his first assignments was to travel to Constantinople to see Trotsky. Soble stayed with the exiled communist and his entourage for several months before returning to Berlin. His brother Robert had done the same only months before; Jack thought he was working for the GPU at the time. After a second trip to see Trotsky the next year, Soble was allowed to visit Myra in Russia.⁶ Soble followed Trotsky to Norway and, at Trotsky's request Soble visited his followers- the "Arch Marxists," as they called themselves - in Greece. Each time after he returned Jack briefed the Soviets in Moscow. Finally in 1933, Jack was allowed to work in Moscow and was more permanently reunited with Myra.

Even while reunited with Myra in Moscow, Jack did not settle in one place or one position; he traveled and worked as the OGPU wanted him to do. Between 1933 and 1940, Jack worked for a newspaper in Baku for a year and then in the press section of the Profintern, a Soviet controlled umbrella organization meant to unite trade unions worldwide, an arm of the Popular Front. In 1935 he returned to Moscow and edited a German language newspaper, *Das Neue Dorf*. Although several political connections helped Jack survive the purges, his Jewish background and former association with

⁶ 100-352345-3473, Enclosure 23.

Trotsky were dangerous characteristics. In the aftermath of the purges Soviet Intelligence reached out to those with foreign experience who remained alive. It was at this time that Jack received his ultimatum and returned to Vilkaviskis.

Jack and his family left for his assignment in 1941, traveling first to Japan, and then to the United States. The travelers split into two groups in Japan. Myra and part of one group entered San Francisco in September 1941. Jack and the other group entered the next month. The group had connections in the United States and quickly settled in several places in the U.S. and Canada. His brother, Boris, had settled in Boston several years before and had formed a branch of the family bristle concern there. Boris immediately put Jack to work and sent him to Canada to transact some business for him.

This gave the NKVD an opportunity to contact Soble. Several months after Jack's arrival a representative of Amtorg wrote him. The representative offered Soble a consignment of bristles for purchase and suggested that Jack travel to New York City to discuss the transaction. Soble traveled to New York to see [Fyodr?] Fomin, chief of Amtorg's Bristle Division. Fomin set up a meeting between Jack and a new contact. Soble met this contact several times. Each time, the contact pressed Jack to continue working for the Soviets. Jack, according to his story, was reticent at first but eventually agreed to continue his work for Soviet intelligence.

Soble moved to New York City with his family and a share of his father's assets. Soble said he turned down an assignment to take over a spy ring in Washington, D.C. in the early 1940's. Soble did not admit to the Bureau that he did any intelligence work at this time. He did note that a Soviet called the "Professor," probably Stephan Choundenko, was introduced to him. Nothing appears to be known about Soble's actions

between his move to New York and his supervision of CHORD, i.e. the BMMC. It is clear that from his contact with Fomin that Soble began working for the Soviets in the United States by 1942.

In 1944, he became associated with CHORD and he continued his work, meeting with the Sterns, Morros, Jane Foster, Mark Zborowski, and other agents through 1945. The defections of Bentley and Gouzenko entailed drastic reevaluations of Soviet assets in the United States. Soble shifted his efforts to the United States and ran Jane Foster and George Zlatovsky for a time while establishing a bristle factory in France for himself. If the Bureau knew of other active work, Soble did between 1946 and 1957, it has not yet released the evidence of it.

Soble only periodically returned to the U.S. between 1946 and 1956. But he had permanently returned by the time Justice decided to prosecute him. In January 1957, as noted, he and Myra were arrested. Soble spent the next several years in jail, periodically testifying in trials arising out of MOCASE and fighting mental illness. In 1961 he was paroled. He died several years later. Myra was officially pardoned by President Bush in 1991; it is not known if she still lives or not.

Jane Foster and George Michael Zlatovski

Jane Foster was born in California in 1912 to an Irish Catholic mother and a New England Protestant father. She grew up spoiled by her mother and convinced that her father's distant, dour manner made her feel constantly "rebuffed" by him; she noted that she only realized as an adult that he loved her.⁷ Although intelligent - Dean Rusk said that she had a photographic memory and fluent in several languages⁸ - her rebellious personality combined and her mother's pampering made for a troublesome student.

At college, though, Jane excelled at the study of art and graduated with a degree in the subject in 1935. Upon graduating, Jane toured Europe. She arrived via a small Norwegian freighter. Her travels took her to Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Berlin, Moscow and Paris. While in Paris Jane received notice that she had been awarded a scholarship to study art with Lionel Feininger, a German Jewish painter recently arrived in the States. Jane returned in May on the *Rex*. Sometime early in her art studies Jane apparently became interested in Javanese sculpture and completed a master's thesis on this subject.⁹

⁷ The primary source of information about Jane's life is her autobiographical apology, An Un-American Lady (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., 1980). Although all autobiography's express the author's biases Foster's book is an especially problematic source for three reasons: 1) Foster was trained in black propaganda, the use of false information to persuade another to act according to the author's intent; 2) Foster was a liar (she notes many occasions where she lied under oath and to authorities she did not respect) and so it is difficult to separate fact from fiction; 3) Foster apparently made a careful effort to address all extent information concerning the charges against her thus suggesting that she may well be using black propaganda to make her case [Foster, An Un-American Lady, pp.51-3].

⁸ Foster, An Un-American Lady, p.52. Jane, though, derides Rusk as a Nazi sympathizer.

⁹ NY Herald Tribune reported on 9 July 1957, p.1, that Jane had attended the University of California as well as Mills College. This background information apparently came from the Justice Department announcement concerning the indictment.

The record here is a bit confusing as it is not clear if or when Jane formally studied Javanese sculpture. Still, she had enough interest in the South Pacific that she attended a reception for delegates to a conference of the Institute for Pacific Relations.¹⁰

At this reception, she met Dutch diplomat Leo Kamper. Jane said that when French officials who questioned her as she sought asylum from her 1957 indictment she learned that Kamper was head of Dutch counterintelligence in the East Indies during the time they were married.

Her life as Mrs. Kamper did not last long. Eschewing things colonial, Jane first learned Malay instead of Dutch¹¹ and, according to her autobiography, fought many other minor battles against the customs and prejudices of her husband's people and class. In 1938, Jane returned home due to homesickness and, being a talented artist, started to work as a theatre caricaturist for the San Francisco Chronicle and The People's World.

¹⁰ Interestingly she describes this organization as "the most conservative and innocuous organization possible [Foster, An Un-American Lady, p.69]."

¹¹ Wendell Minnick [Spies and Provocateurs, A Worldwide Encyclopedia of Persons Conducting Espionage and Covert Action, 1946-1991 (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., Inc., 1993)] reports that Jane knew Dutch [p.248]. Romerstein and Levchenko [The KGB vs. the Main Enemy (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989)] say that this is reported in army records [p.193]. It is probable then that Jane stretched the truth to strengthen her point about her resentment of colonialism. She never says she didn't learn Dutch but says that she preferred to learn Malay instead and worked on it surreptitiously in protest. She further added that she had no need for Dutch as everyone spoke English. Thus, she leaves the reader with the impression that she did not learn her husband's language. She similarly manipulates the truth in other places as well; e.g. Jane reports lying under oath several times in the course of her book. Furthermore, there are occasions in her narrative where she alters or stretches the truth to make her case. These are noted in this text where appropriate.

At the same time, “like a ripe fruit ready to drop” as she put it, Jane joined the Communist Party. “Almost by accident,” she later claimed.¹²

Jane moved to New York and roomed with her friend Mary Minton in a Greenwich Village apartment in Sheridan Square. She also found a job working for the American Peace Mobilization and probably met Bill Dodd there. Through the APM that she met Jack and Mary Ryan and reentered the communist fold.¹³ The Ryans also introduced Jane to George Zlatovski, a lodger in their apartment. Jane and George subsequently married several times; the first time was in Washington, DC in 1941

George Michael Zlatovski was born in Kiev, Russia in 1913. His parents emigrated in 1922 and settled in Duluth, Minnesota. His father was of Jewish heritage but an atheist; his mother, a schoolteacher, died of TB when he was a teenager.¹⁴ He became a citizen upon his father’s naturalization. In high school, apparently, George was nicknamed Trotsky.¹⁵ His left leanings, not surprisingly, took him into the Communist

¹² Foster, An Un-American Lady. But the review of Foster’s book in a release made to me by the CIA says Foster joined the CP in 1935 [the FOIA release to this author does not make the origin of the review clear; it may be Studies in Intelligence, Winter 1980, p.51]. The review is by someone who knew Foster, apparently during her OSS stint. A second anomaly is that Jane says she joined when she started helping Connie Stroble distribute copies of the People’s World. This may not add up. Typically, new members were supposed to sell/distribute the party paper as part of their service to the party. This would suggest that Stroble had already joined.

¹³ It is also possible that Jane was given the Ryans as a contact by the San Francisco party organization. Jane noted that the SF party did not want her to leave and instead ordered her to stay to carry on Party work, i.e. distributing papers. Jane chalks up her move to her own willfulness and lack of discipline.

¹⁴ Foster, An Un-American Lady, p.94.

¹⁵ Norman Lucas, The Great American Spy Ring, p.133.

Party. He joined in the early 1930's in Duluth.¹⁶ His dedication to the cause took him to Spain with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in 1938 as an ambulance driver.¹⁷ By reputation George was a "ne'er-do-well."

In 1942, Jane met Martha Stern. According to both Jane's account and Martha's correspondence with Dexter Masters, Masters introduced the two women outside of Carnegie Hall. Masters was escorting Foster to a concert by Sister Rosette Tharpe. Martha and Jane apparently became good friends. Jane subsequently frequented the Sterns' parties until she moved to Washington, DC. Even her account suggests this. Jane describes in detail her familiarity with Martha and her habits. Jane also sublet an apartment from Bill Dodd while she lived in New York City.

At one of Martha's parties, Jane met William Browder.¹⁸ The two subsequently met a number of times in Greenwich Village. Jane reports that she was surprised at such attention given her lowly status in the party. She also reports that both Browder and Martha told her repeatedly that she should be less open in her work for the Party; she would be more useful if she were more discreet. According to her account, she found the suggestions puzzling but welcomed them, as she did not like picketing, petitioning, going to meetings, and distributing literature.¹⁹

¹⁶ Herbert Romerstein and Stanislav Levchenko, The KGB vs. the Main Enemy, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989), p.193

¹⁷ Romerstein and Levchenko, The KGB vs. the Main Enemy, p.193 says that there is an interview with George re his experience in the Duluth Herald Tribune of 3 September 1938.

¹⁸ It is interesting what information Jane feels needs to be told and what she leaves out.

¹⁹ Note Jane apparently followed Party discipline fairly-well in NY contrary to her earlier disavowal of this.

Jane took up Browder's suggestion and became less involved in the public Party. Because of her experience in Indonesia, she began working in the Netherlands Information Office of the Dutch Government in Exile. Jane and George rented rooms in the home of communist Susan B. Anthony, the 2nd. George, though, joined the army as an engineer and soon left for basic training

Jane switched to the Board of Economic Warfare at the suggestion of an unidentified friend, Soviet agent Charles Flato by some reports. She worked in the "Reoccupation and Rehabilitation of Liberated Territories" section. Here she wrote reports on rice production in Indonesia, cheese production in Greece and industrial alcohol production in France. It was while she was in the BEW that Jane was recruited for the OSS.

Over the winter of 1943/44, Jane attended OSS testing and training, striking up a friendship with Elizabeth MacDonald.²⁰ Jane was in the Morale Operations Division and learned both black and white propaganda. White propaganda disseminates true information in order to harm the enemy; black propaganda uses false information to do the same. Jane wrote that she was never much for security when she began because of her civilian background; MacDonald made the exact same point. Still, the OSS "harnessed the pixies" in the new friends according to MacDonald. This did not mean

²⁰ MacDonald and Foster were apparently similar in temperament and background, although it is clear from *Undercover Girl* that MacDonald did not harbor Foster's politics. They were early recruits by Donovan who sought "a cross between a Smith graduate, a Powers model and a Katie Gibb's secretary." In Jane, he got the intelligence of the first but not the other two. What he did get was someone with knowledge of Europe and Asia as well as strong language proficiencies in Malay, Dutch, German, and French [Minnick, *Spies and Provocateurs*, p.248]. Ironically, Jane also fit Donovan's defense of his society hires; i.e., "that Park Avenue could produce as good second story men as the Bowery.[Elizabeth MacDonald, *Undercover Girl* (New York: MacMillan, 1947), p.22]"

that the two did not make trouble from time to time nor that they did not take long coffee breaks in attempts to learn more about the nature of the OSS and their fellow workers.

While Jane was making her way through the Washington into the OSS she was also being vetted by the Soviets for intelligence work will follow. On June 16, 1942, a cable was sent from the Soviet consulate in New York to Moscow. Vassili Zubilin, then head of KGB operations in the US, informed Lt. Gen. P. M. Fitin that LIZA was cultivating a “fellowcountrywoman,” Jane Foster.²¹ It was not until August of 1964 that the Bureau was able to identify LIZA as Martha Dodd. At the time of this message, Zubilin reported that Foster was working in “WASHINGTON in the DUTCH [unrecovered] [? translator] of Malay languages”. The rest of the message concerning Foster was not recovered. The meaning here is straightforward: the KGB was interested in Foster as a possible agent; Foster was not yet a Soviet agent; and a Soviet operative, later identified as Martha Dodd, was “cultivating” her.²²

Her final acceptance as a Soviet agent appears to have been put on hold until she returned from Asia, but the Venona decrypts make it clear that she had been vetted even before she served in the OSS.²³ Most likely, she was recruited before she went overseas.

²¹ Soviets referred to foreign communists as fellowcountrymen or fellowcountrywomen.

²² See the introduction for a general discussion of the use of Venona as a historical source.

Given the amount of information that the Bureau had gathered in its MOCASE investigation this failure was probably due to the difficulty in decrypting the cable itself rather than an investigative failure.

²³ Robert Louis Benson and Michael Warner, ed. Venona: Soviet Espionage and the American Response, 1939-1957 (Washington, D.C., National Security Agency and Central Intelligence Agency, 1996), p.203, Message, New York 854 to Moscow, 16 June 1942.

Other than some correspondence between Jane and the Sterns, there is no evidence that Jane was in contact with the Soviets or their agents.²⁴

From her arrival, there in July 13 through September 9, 1945 she produced black propaganda in the China-Burma-India theatre. At war's end she was assigned to temporary duty aiding in the repatriation of American POW's. She met future Indonesian president Suharto several times and appears to have gained his confidence. From Suharto Jane became informed of the plans and aspirations of the Indonesian anti-colonial forces. Sukarno told her of "the aims and policy of the new republic," how it was organized, the strength of its armed forces, its plans for dealing with foreign property.

Returning to America, Foster reported on of her Indonesian experience, submitted it to the OSS. The person who received it classified the paper immediately classified the document, although most OSS material after VJ day was treated routinely. In her autobiography, she says that she gave copies of this report to several reporters in San Francisco and to Jack Soble, a Soviet espionage agent.²⁵ She dismisses her action by saying that such classifications were meaningless, and any way, she would have given it to anyone interested in it as she had several copies. That she gave it to a Soviet spy, she suggests, was a fluke. Her explanation does not ring true.

²⁴ Jane cites one such letter from the Sterns as the last straw in her building resentment of the Sterns. She suggests that their pompousness finally led her to ignore their letters and break contact with them. This does not hold up given that she rented Bill's apartment after the war, met with the Sterns and Jack Soble in 1945 upon returning from Indonesia and made the Sterns aware of her activity up through 1946 when she went to Europe with George.

²⁵ I was unable to find corroborating or refuting evidence of this claim as I could not search all of the San Francisco area papers at this time. Given Jane's communist connections and past, it is possible that the reporters to whom she refers worked for a communist paper.

Jane's "gift" to Soble marked the start of her career as a Soviet agent. Public descriptions of Zlatovski's role as a Soviet agent claim that she and her husband George developed information about U.S. soldiers assigned in Europe. George also passed on information about East Bloc refugees when he worked for the European Refugee Commission. That the two operated as agents during this time is suggested by her continued contact with Jack Soble in Europe.²⁶

A special federal grand jury for the Southern District Court of New York indicted Jane Foster and George Zlatovski on July 8, 1957. It charged that the Zlatovskis had been members of a conspiracy to commit espionage against the United States government for the Soviet Union. This conspiracy had begun seventeen years earlier between officials of the Soviet Union and its agents, Jack and Myra Soble and Robert Soblen. It aimed to "to communicate, deliver and transmit" to the Soviet Union "information relating to intelligence and counterintelligence activities of the United States Government, and relating to the personnel, arms and equipment of the United States armed forces."²⁷ The Zlatovskis, the jury charged were recruited into the conspiracy later on and subsequently engaged in espionage on behalf of the Soviets for a number of years. At the time that this indictment was made public, the Zlatovskis were residing in France. They never returned to the United States. Jane died in France in 1980, only months before her autobiography, An Un-American Lady, was published. It is not known if George is still alive or not.

²⁶ Jack Soble with Jack Lotto, "How I Spied for the Soviets," November 14, 15, and 16, 1957. Boris Morros with Jack Lotto, "My Ten Years as a Counterspy," Look Magazine, 11/26/1957, vol. 21, no.24, p.37.

²⁷ Indictment of the Zlatovskis.

Robert Soblen²⁸

Robert Soblen, as noted earlier, was a former Soviet agent and business associate of Alfred Stern. Soblen was arrested on November 29, 1960 and tried in 1961 for conspiracy to commit espionage for his role in the conspiracy begun between Jack Soble and Lavrenti Beria and described in the Stern indictment. He was eventually convicted but fled to Israel. At the time he had terminal cancer and was attempting to die somewhere other than in jail. Israel extradited Soblen but he took an overdose of pain pills while flying back to the United States. The plane was forced to land in London and Soblen died there on September 11, 1962.

It is not clear that Soblen ever directly worked for his brother or, even with him. Jack's testimony suggests that the two compared notes from time to time because they worked on related projects but neither really knew the details of each other's work. In 1946, as we saw earlier, Soblen worked with Alfred in setting up the Inter-American Pharmaceutical Company. The purpose of this venture was to sell drugs in Mexico and South America; Jack Soble and Morros (Morros apparently reported what Soble had told him) later told the FBI that the company was to be a cover for Soviet agents like the BMMC was. It too quickly failed primarily over disagreements between Stern and an unwitting partner were to provide the capital, Soblen was to provide the medical expertise

²⁸ The material re Soblen and IACP is from the Stern File and discussed earlier. The trial transcripts and court docket for 60 CR 996 may be found in the National Archives, Northeastern Branch. The New York Times of 11/30/1960 and June-July, 1961 cover the arrest and trial. Of interest during the trial is the apparent mental breakdown of Jack Soble and his eventual testimony during the trial. Morros was not called as a witness, although he was initially placed on the list of prospective prosecution witnesses.

and his knowledge of the pharmaceutical industry to the venture. The company made three shipments of penicillin and other medical supplies before closing their doors.

Jacob Albam²⁹

Jacob Albam was born in Volkovychki, Lithuania on October 26, 1892. He was recruited in Paris in October of 1937 and received mail for a cutoff for a Soviet illegal. In 1945, Albam received instruction in photography and was returned to France. In 1947 he ran into Jack Soble in Paris and helped him to regain contact with Soviet intelligence. Apparently, Soble had lost contact after the Bentley defection and did not restore it until meeting Albam.

That same year, Albam was ordered to the United States. He arrived in September 1947 and married an American citizen in 1948. Although Jack Soble was reported to have arranged the marriage and set up a business for Albam, Albam's testimony to the FBI suggests that it was an unknown Soviet agent who set him up in a stationary store in New York. With the help of contacts, also reported to have been Soble, Albam married an American citizen on April 30, 1948. Jack Soble did act as Albam's control for a time as he was responsible for paying Albam between 1948 and 1949. The FBI report suggests that Albam had no contact with Soble after 1949 and it reports no further contact with Soviet intelligence. It would appear that Albam was set up as a "sleeper," an agent held inactive for use at a later date. He was arrested on January 25, 1957 and sentenced to five years in prison.

²⁹ The primary source for this description is from MOCASE File 100-352385-3473, Blind Memorandum, 5/16/1957, re Jacob Albam with aliases... One may also consult the Morros and Soble articles cited here and in the bibliography although their validity is questionable.

Mark Zborowski³⁰

Like the Soble brothers, Mark Zborowski, code-named ETIENNE, TULIP, and in Venona - KANT, spent many years infiltrating Trotsky's organization in Europe and Mexico. Zborowski's entrée to the group was through his friendship with Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov. Zborowski's biggest success for the Soviets was in the theft of Trotsky's archive while it was stored in Paris. He was also a participant in the effort to track Soviet defector Victor Kravchenko who died under questioned circumstances in 1945.

Zborowski was convicted in 1957 for perjury before the grand jury when he denied that he had clandestinely met with Jack Soble. In 1959, his conviction was reversed by the Court of Appeals because he had not been afforded copies of Soble's grand jury testimony about him. He was not retried until 1962. At the time he was teaching cultural anthropology; interestingly, the prosecuting US District Attorney Thomas Gilchrist wrote him a letter of recommendation to help him obtain a teaching position between the time his conviction was overturned and his second trial. He received a sentence of three and a half years; press accounts do not say whether time served on his original sentence counted towards the new one.

³⁰ Romerstein's and Breindel's Venona Secrets has a good discussion of Zborowski and his role in infiltrating the Trotskyites and later in the Soble Ring and this brief description is largely drawn from there. The New York Times covered the retrial between November and December of 1962.

Minor Subjects

Henry and Beatrice Spitz

Henry and Beatrice Spitz were wealthy Americans whom Morros accused of being sources of information to him. He claimed that they had passed photos of a military installation to him. At the end of MOCASE, the Spitzes were out of the country, apparently in Germany. They denied all charges through the press and were never charged.

Ilya Wolston³¹

Ilya Wolston, Jack Soble's nephew, was another accused member of Jack Soble's ring. During World War II, he received training in military intelligence at Camp Ritchie, Maryland, and, according to Morros, Soble reported to Moscow that Wolston was one of his sources. Wolston was convicted of perjury in 1957.

Leah Malament

Leah Malament was a "cutout," she set up meetings for Vasilli Zubilin and her apartment served as a mail drop and periodic meeting place. Boris Morros reported that Melament was his contact for arranging meetings with Zubilin. She does not appear to have been arrested or tried in connection with these matters.

³¹ Romerstein and Breindel, The Venona Secrets, p.370.

Horst Baerensprung, Hans Hirschfeld, and Johanna Beker³²

Horst Baerensprung and Hans Hirschfeld, two German Social Democrats, were employees in the OSS. They allegedly, gave information to Johanna Beker for transfer to Robert Soblen. At the time of the Soblen trial, Baerensprung was dead and Hirschfeld, a German official, denied the charges and refused to come to the United States to testify. During the trial, Beker said Baerensprung and Hirschfeld passed information about the identity and movement of refugees in Europe of interest to the Soviet Union, which she then passed to Soblen who paid her for the information.

Floyd Cleveland Miller³³

Miller was a writer associated with Robert Soblen. As a witness for the prosecution, he identified Robert Soblen as his case officer and said that Soviet intelligence wanted him to use a cover as a journalist to work as an agent in Europe to infiltrate the Trotskyite movement.

Henry and Beatrice Spitz

The Spitzes were accused of passing photos of the atomic weapons facility, which their home in Albuquerque, New Mexico overlooked. Henry Spitz, a resident physician

³² David Anderson, "Ex-spy identifies red double agent," New York Times, p.9, c.1.

³³ David Anderson, "Soblen is named as 'contact' man," New York Times, 7/6/1961, p.5, c.1.

at the area veteran's hospital, was also accused of gathering other information that was then passed to Robert Soblen.

Others Involved in the MOCASE

Others associated with the Soble/Soblen Spy rings included: Lucy Booker, Sylvia Callen, Esther Rand, and Rebecca Getzoff according to a brief for the United States in U.S. v. Soblen, 12/29/1961 found in the U.S. Attorney's file on the case, 60 CR 661, National Archives, Northeastern Branch.

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